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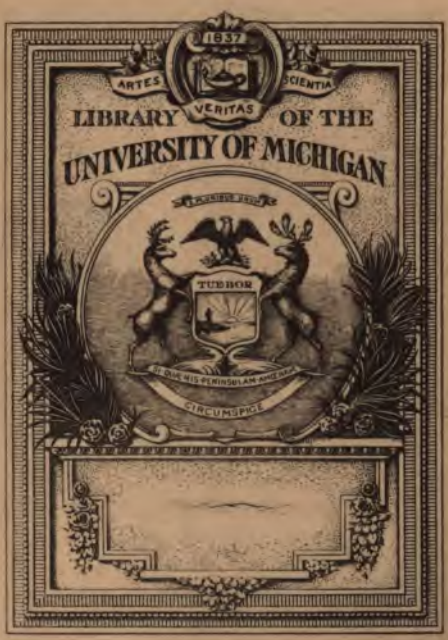
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THREE MONTHS IN JAMAICA,

IN 1832:

COMPRISING

A RESIDENCE OF SEVEN WEEKS ON A SUGAR PLANTATION.

By HENRY WHITELEY.

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THREE MONTHS IN JAMAICA.

THE reasons that have induced me, after mature reflection, to lay before the public the following account of what I witnessed in Jamaica, during my late visit, are briefly these. 1st. I feel it due to my own character, unimportant as is my station in society, to detail, for the information of many friends who have kindly interested themselves in my welfare, the circumstances that led to my return home so unexpectedly, and after so short a residence. 2ndly. I feel it due to my fellow-men—to my countrymen in England, and to their fellow-subjects in Jamaica—to state, without reserve and without exaggeration, the facts which there fell under my observation. Lastly, I feel it to be a religious duty—a duty to God as well as to man (since Providence, by means so unforeseen, and at so eventful a juncture, has placed me in circumstances that render my humble testimony of some immediate value), to give my plain and deliberate testimony respecting the character of the system which I found in operation in that colony. In performing this task, I am aware that I shall inevitably give some offence, and awaken some hostility; but, constrained as I am by considerations which I DARE not disregard, and avoiding, as I shall carefully do, all disclosures but such as are requisite to authenticate the facts and develope the system, I will not flinch from whatever responsibility the performance of my duty involves, however painful in some instances it may be to others as well as to myself.

I arrived in Jamaica on the 3rd of September, 1832. I was sent out by a respectable West India house in London, under the patronage of a relative of mine, who is a partner in that house; being furnished with a recommendation to their acting attorney in the island, with a view to be employed either in a store, or as a book-keeper upon a plantation.

Previously to my arrival in Jamaica, I had no clear conception of the nature of Colonial Slavery; and my anticipations in regard to the treatment and condition of the slaves were favourable rather than otherwise. It so happened, that, excepting what I had seen in newspapers, I had never read a single publication against Colonial Slavery, and had never either attended a public meeting, or heard a lecture delivered on the subject. I was, in fact, one of those individuals who believe that there is more *real* slavery in England than in any of her colonies. Many a time I had blamed such gentlemen as Mr. Buxton, Dr. Lushington, and others, for making so much ado in Parliament about Colonial Slavery, and neglecting (as I conceived) the slavery of the poor factory children at home, with whose condition I was well acquainted, having been all my life resident in a manufacturing district, and concerned, with some of my relatives, in the blanket business, at Heckmondwike, near Leeds. What tended to confirm me much in these views was the perusal of the last Order in Council for the Amelioration of Slavery, which I understood to have been sent out for adoption in all our slave colonies. A copy of this document had been sent by a member of parliament to the Central Committee at Leeds on the Factory System, of which I was a member, in order to enable us to judge whether the condition of the West India slaves or that of the factory children was preferable; and the conclusion which I came to upon its perusal, and under the persuasion that it had been generally adopted, was this—that, all things considered, the condition of the negro slave was much preferable to that of the factory child. And with these impressions I landed at St. Ann's Bay, in Jamaica.

The day that I landed I was informed, by a clerk of the manager's, that a horse would be sent down from New Ground estate for me next morning; and that I would have to remain on that estate till I heard from the manager, or attorney of the proprietors, who was then at his own property, about sixteen miles from the Bay.

The same day I dined at St. Ann's Bay, on board the vessel I arrived in, in company with several colonists, among whom was Mr. Hamilton Brown, representative for the parish of St. Ann, in the Colonial Assembly. Some reference having been made to the new Order in Council, I was rather startled to hear that gentleman swear by his Maker that that Order should never be adopted

in Jamaica; nor would the planters of Jamaica, he said, permit the interference of the Home Government with their slaves in any shape. A great deal was said by him and others present about the happiness and comfort enjoyed by the slaves, and of the many advantages possessed by them of which the poor in England were destitute. Among other circumstances mentioned in proof of this, Mr. Robinson, a wharfinger, stated that a slave in that town had sent out printed cards to invite a party of his negro acquaintance to a supper party. One of these cards was handed to Mr. Hamilton Brown, who said he would present it to the Governor, as a proof of the comfortable condition of the slave population. This, and other circumstances then mentioned, tended to conform the notions I had brought from England respecting slavery in Jamaica; and, although I was somewhat shocked and staggered by seeing the same day the Methodist chapel at St. Ann's Bay lying in ruins, as it had been destroyed by the whites six months before, and by learning that the Missionaries were no longer permitted to preach in that parish, I nevertheless left the place next morning with my favourable impressions respecting the condition of the slaves not materially abated. These impressions, however, I was not permitted long to indulge.

I proceeded on horseback to New Ground estate the next day. On my way thither I saw much majestic and beautiful scenery, and enjoyed the prospect exceedingly, until I came in sight of a gang of negroes at work. Most of them were females; and they were superintended by a driver, with the cart-whip in his hand. Just as I rode past, the driver cracked his whip and cried out, "Work! work!" They were manuring the canes, and carrying the manure in baskets on their heads. It appeared to me disgustingly dirty work; for the moisture from the manure was dripping through the baskets, and running down the bodies of the negroes. This sight annoyed me considerably, and raised some doubts as to the preferable condition of West India slaves to factory children. The enchanting scenery and beautiful humming birds no longer amused me; and the thundering crack of the cart-whip, sounding in my ears as I rode along, excited feelings of a very unpleasing description.

On reaching the estate I was received in the most friendly manner by the overseer, and entertained with West Indian hospitality. This gentleman, after some enquiries as to the state of things in England,

began to enlarge on the comfortable condition of the slaves; and, pointing to some negro coopers who were working in the yard, asked if I could perceive any difference between the condition of these slaves and that of English labourers. I owned I could not: they seemed to work with great regularity and apparent good humour.

Immediately afterwards the overseer called out, in a very authoritative tone, "Blow shell." A large conch shell was then blown by one of the domestic slaves, and in a few minutes four negro drivers made their appearance in front of the house, accompanied by six common negroes. The drivers had each a long staff in his hand, and a large cart-whip coiled round his shoulders. They appeared to be very stout athletic men. They stood before the hall door, and the overseer put on his hat and went out to them, while I sat at the open window and observed the scene which followed,—having been informed that the other six negroes were to be punished.

When the overseer went out, the four drivers gave him an account, on notched tallies, of their half day's work, and received fresh orders. The overseer then asked a few questions of the drivers respecting the offences of the six slaves brought up for punishment. No question was asked of the culprits themselves, nor was any explanation waited for. Sentence was instantly pronounced, and instantly carried into execution.

The first was a man of about thirty-five years of age. He was what is called a pen-keeper, or cattle herd; and his offence was having suffered a mule to go astray. At the command of the overseer he proceeded to strip off part of his clothes, and laid himself flat on his belly, his back and buttocks being uncovered. One of the drivers then commenced flogging him with the cart-whip. This whip is about ten feet long, with a short stout handle, and is an instrument of terrible power. It is whirled by the operator round his head, and then brought down with a rapid motion of the arm upon the recumbent victim, causing the blood to spring at every stroke. When I saw this spectacle, now for the first time exhibited before my eyes, with all its revolting accompaniments, and saw the degraded and mangled victim writhing and groaning under the infliction, I felt horror-struck. I trembled, and turned sick: but being determined to see the whole to an end, I kept my station at the window. The sufferer, writhing like a wounded worm, every time the lash cut across his body cried

out, "Lord! Lord! Lord!" When he had received about twenty lashes, the driver stopped to pull up the poor man's shirt (or rather smock frock), which had worked down upon his galled posteriors. The sufferer then cried, "Think me no man? think me no man?" By that exclamation I understood him to say "Think you I have not the feelings of a man?" The flogging was instantly recommenced and continued; the negro continuing to cry "Lord! Lord! Lord!" till thirty-nine lashes had been inflicted. When the man rose up from the ground, I perceived the blood oozing out from the lacerated and tumefied parts where he had been flogged; and he appeared greatly exhausted. But he was instantly ordered off to his usual occupation.

The next was a young man apparently about eighteen or nineteen years of age. He was forced to uncover himself and lie down in the same mode as the former, and was held down by the hands and feet by four slaves, one of whom was a young man who was himself to be flogged next. This latter was a mulatto—the offspring, as I understood, of some European formerly on the estate by a negro woman, and consequently born to slavery. These two youths were flogged exactly in the mode already described, and writhed and groaned under the lash, as if enduring great agony. The mulatto bled most, and appeared to suffer most acutely. They received each thirty-nine lashes. Their offence was some deficiency in the performance of the task prescribed to them. They were both ordered to join their gang as usual in the afternoon at cane-cutting.

Two young women of about the same age were, one after the other, then laid down and held by four men, their back parts most indecently uncovered, and thirty-nine lashes of the blood-stained whip inflicted upon each poor creature's posteriors. Their exclamation likewise was "Lord! Lord! Lord!" They seemed also to suffer acutely, and were apparently a good deal lacerated. Another woman (the sixth offender) was also laid down and uncovered for the lash; but at the intercession of one of the drivers she was reprieved. The offence of these three women was similar to that of the two young men—some defalcation in the amount of labour.

The overseer stood by and witnessed the whole of this cruel operation, with as much seeming indifference as if he had been paying them
I was meanwhile perfectly unmanned by mingled
have no reason to believe that the *natural*

feelings of this young man (whose age did not exceed twenty-four years) were less humane or sensitive than my own. But such is the callousness which constant familiarity with scenes of cruelty engenders. He had been a book-keeper for four years previously, on another estate belonging to the same proprietors, and had been appointed overseer on this estate only a few months before. His reception of me when I arrived was so kind, frank, and cordial, that I could not have believed him, had I not seen it with my own eyes, to be *capable* of inflicting such cruelty on a fellow-creature.

As soon as this scene was over, the overseer came into the hall, and asked me to drink some rum and water with him. I told him I was sick, and could taste nothing: that I was in fact overwhelmed with horror at the scene I had just witnessed. He said it was not a pleasant duty certainly, but it was an indispensable one; and that I would soon get used, as others did, to such spectacles. I asked if he found it necessary to inflict such punishments frequently. He replied it was uncertain; "I may not," he said, "have to do it again this month, or I may have to do it to-morrow."

This, my first full view of West India Slavery, occurred on the 4th of September, 1832, between twelve and two o'clock, being the day after my landing in the island, and within an hour after my arrival on the plantation.

I resided on New Ground estate, from the time of my arrival in the beginning of September, and exclusive of some occasional absences, altogether fully seven weeks; and, during that period, I witnessed with my own eyes the *regular* flogging of upwards of twenty negroes. I heard also of many other negroes being flogged by order of the overseer and book-keepers in the field, while I resided on the plantation, besides the cases which came under my own personal observation. Neither do I include in this account the slighter floggings inflicted by the drivers in superintending the working gangs,—which I shall notice afterwards.

The following are additional cases of which I have a distinct recollection. But I have retained the precise date of only one of these cases (the 12th) from having found it necessary to destroy almost all my papers, in consequence of the threats of the Colonial Unionists.

1st. A slave employed in the boiling-house. He was a very stout negro, and uncommonly well dressed for a slave. He was laid down

on the ground, held by two men, and flogged on the naked breech in the mode I have described, receiving 39 lashes. I was afterwards assured by one of the book-keepers that this negro had really committed no offence, but that the overseer had him punished to *spite* a book-keeper under whose charge this slave was at the time, and with whom he had a difference; and, as he could not flog the book-keeper, he flogged the slave. Such at least was the account I received from a third party, another book-keeper. I could scarcely have given credit to such an allegation, had I not heard of similar cases on other plantations, on authority I had no cause to doubt.

2nd & 3rd. Two young women. This punishment took place one evening on the barbecue, where pimento is dried. Mr. M'Lean, the overseer, and I, were sitting in the window seat of his hall; and I was just remarking to him that I observed the drivers took great pride in being able to crack their whips loud and well. While we were thus conversing, the gang of young slaves, employed in plucking pimento, came in with their basket-loads. The head book-keeper as usual proceeded to examine the baskets, to ascertain that each slave had duly performed the task allotted. The baskets of two poor girls were pronounced deficient; and the book-keeper immediately ordered them to be flogged. The overseer did not interfere, nor ask a single question, the matter not being deemed of sufficient importance to require his interference, though this took place within a few yards of the open window where we were sitting. One of the girls was instantly laid down, her back parts uncovered in the usual brutal and indecent manner, and the driver commenced flogging—every stroke upon her flesh giving a loud crack, and the wretched creature at the same time calling out in agony, "Lord! Lord! Lord!" "That," said the overseer, turning to me, with a chuckling laugh, "that is the best cracking, by G—d!"* The other female was then flogged also on the bare posteriors, but not quite so severely. They received, as usual, each 39 lashes.

4th & 5th. On another occasion I saw two girls from 10 to 13 years of age, flogged by order of the overseer. They belonged to the second

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* The cart-whip, when wielded by a vigorous arm, gives forth a loud report, which, without any exaggeration, may be likened to the report of a small pistol. I have often heard it distinctly at two miles' distance in the open air.

gang, employed in cane-weeding, and were accused of having been idle that morning. Two other girls of the same age were brought up to hold them down. They got each 39.

6th & 7th. After this I saw two young men flogged (very severely) in the cooper's yard. I did not learn their offence.

8th. On another occasion, a man in the road leading from New Ground to Golden Spring. We met this man while riding out, and for some offence which I did not learn (for by that time I had found my enquiries on such points had become offensive), the overseer called a driver from the field and ordered him 39 on the spot.

9th & 10th. Two young men before breakfast, for having slept too long. They were mule-drivers, and it being then crop time, they had been two days and a night previously at work without sleep. As the overseer and I were going out at day-break (the sun was not yet up), we found them only putting the harness on their mules. They ought, according to the regulations then prescribed on the plantation, to have been out half an hour sooner; and for this offence they received a very severe flogging.

11th. A girl who had been missing for some days, having absconded from the plantation for fear of punishment.

I shall mention only other two cases which particularly excited my sympathy; for, after a few weeks, although my moral abhorrence of slavery continued to increase, my sensibility to the sight of physical suffering was so greatly abated, that a common flogging no longer affected me to the very painful degree that I at first experienced.

12th. The first of these two cases was that of a married woman, the mother of several children. She was brought up to the overseer's door one morning; and one of the drivers who came with her accused her of having stolen a fowl. Some feathers, said to have been found in her hut, were exhibited as evidence of her guilt. The overseer asked her if she would pay for the fowl. She said something in reply which I did not clearly understand. The question was repeated, and a similar reply again given. The overseer then said, "Put her down." On this the woman set up a shriek, and rent the air with her cries of terror. Her countenance grew quite ghastly, and her lips became pale and livid. I was close to her and particularly noticed her remarkable aspect and expression of countenance. The overseer swore fearfully, and repeated his order—"Put her dow[illegible] then craved per-

mission to tie some covering round her nakedness, which she was allowed to do. She was then extended on the ground, and held down by two negroes. Her gown and shift were literally torn from her back, and, thus brutally exposed, she was subjected to the cart-whip. The punishment inflicted on this poor creature was inhumanly severe. She was a woman somewhat plump in her person, and the whip being wielded with great vigour, every stroke cut deep into the flesh. She writhed and twisted her body violently under the infliction—moaning loudly, but uttering no exclamation in words, except once when she cried out, entreating that her nakedness (her parts of shame) might not be indecently exposed,—appearing to suffer, from matronly modesty, even more acutely on account of her indecent exposure than the cruel laceration of her body. But the overseer only noticed her appeal by a brutal reply (too gross to be repeated), and the flogging continued. Disgusted as I was, I witnessed the whole to a close. I numbered the lashes, stroke by stroke, and counted *fifty*,—thus exceeding by eleven the number allowed by the Colonial law to be inflicted at the arbitrary will of the master or manager. This was the only occasion on which I saw the legal number of 39 lashes exceeded, but I never knew the overseer or head book-keeper give less than 39. This poor victim was shockingly lacerated. When permitted to rise, she again shrieked violently. The overseer swore roughly, and threatened, if she was not quiet, to put her down again. He then ordered her to be taken to the hot-house or hospital, and put in the stocks. She was to be confined in the stocks for several nights, while she worked in the yard during the day at light work. She was too severely mangled to be able to go to the field for some days. This flogging took place on the 27th of September.

13th. The flogging of an old man, about 60 years of age, is the last case I shall mention. He was the third driver upon the estate,—there being five altogether, whose sole employment was literally *driving*, or coercing by the whip, the negro population to labour. With this old man I had had some conversation, and felt particularly interested in him, for his silvery locks and something in his aspect reminded me powerfully of my aged father, whom I had left in England. He had been upon the estate a great number of years. He told me that not one of the negroes belonging to the gang he wrought in when he first came to New Ground was now alive. He came up to the overseer's

door at shell-blow one day, and gave in, as is the practice, on a tally or bit of notched stick, his account of the half day's work of the gang he superintended. The overseer was dissatisfied—said it was insufficient —and ordered him to get a flogging. The old man said, "Well, Busha, me could have done no better, had you been standing by." Then, groaning deeply, he laid down his staff and whip, unloosed his clothes, and lay quietly down to be flogged without being held. One of the other drivers, who had been called forward, appeared very reluctant to perform the office; but, on the overseer swearing a rough oath or two, he proceeded to inflict the usual punishment of 39 lashes. The old man, looking up in the overseer's face imploringly, cried out after every stroke for several minutes, "Busha! Busha! Busha!" but seeing no signs of relenting, he ceased to call on him, expressing his feelings only by groans. I was deeply affected by the sight, and felt at the moment that these groans were an awful appeal to the judgment seat of Him who heareth the cry of the oppressed. When the punishment was over, and the poor man arose, the other drivers looked at each other and shook their heads, but uttered not a word. They dared not.

In conversing with the overseer about these floggings, I had more than once expressed the pain and horror I felt at seeing that negro slavery was accompanied by so much suffering. The overseer endeavoured to persuade me, contrary to the evidence of my own senses, that the punishments were not severe, and assured me that there were, moreover, negroes who had never been flogged in their lives. I afterwards questioned the head book-keeper, Mr. Burrows, on this point; and asked him if he could point out a single working negro on the estate, male or female, single or married, who had not been flogged? After some reflection he replied, that he could not specify a single one who had not been punished with the cart-whip. Now there were 277 slaves on that estate, of whom a very small proportion were children, and yet a man who had been among them for only two years did not know of one (with the exception of mere children) who had not been once or oftener subjected to this cruel, degrading, and revolting punishment.

After these conversations I made every exertion to ascertain this fact, by making enquiries among the slaves themselves, as opportunities occurred. The general reply to such interrogations was—"Ah!

Massa, me been flog many a time by Busha." On putting the question to an aged negro who had formerly been employed to take care of the sheep, but was now in the stable, he said he had been flogged many a time. "And what were you flogged for?" I enquired. "When sheep go stray—when sheep sick—when sheep die—then," said he, "Busha put me down and flog me till me bleed." "And how many lashes," I asked, "did Busha ever give you?" "Ah! Massa," said the poor old man, "when me down na ground, and dey flog me till me bleed, me someting else to do den for count de lashes." This same man, as he was saddling my horse on the day I finally left the estate, made a remark that struck me. "Now, Massa," said he, "you see how poor negro be 'pressed (oppressed). We no mind de work—but dey 'press us too too bad."

I asked another negro, a married man and the father of a family, if either he or his wife had ever been flogged. He replied, that both he and his wife had been flogged frequently: and further remarked, that it was very disheartening that after trying "to be good negro," they could not escape the lash any more than the worst slaves on the estate. This man was a Baptist—a very religious and exemplary man. He had been a member of the Baptist chapel at St. Ann's Bay, which I saw lying in ruins. He could read a little, and I gave him a hymn book.

This last mentioned slave was a carpenter. I therefore asked the head carpenter (a Scotchman, named Walden), if he had ever flogged this man. He replied that he had, and added, that he was obliged to flog all the slaves under his charge. He never took them out with him into the wood, he said, without the cart-whip, so that if any of them did not please him he might put him down and give him a flogging.

I asked others similar questions, and received, in every instance, answers to the same effect—all proving the truth of the head book-keeper's statement that he knew not a single working slave on the estate who had not been flogged.

I may here mention that on meeting with a slave of the name of Johnstone, belonging to the neighbouring estate of Green Park, I asked him if he had ever been flogged. He replied—"Yes, Massa, me been flog, and been work in chains three months and three days." On enquiring further, I found this man's offence was going to the

Methodist chapel (Mr. Whitehouse's); and that for this offence he had been cruelly flogged by order of his owner, Mr. Hurlock (not by the overseer), and worked in chains for three months.

During my residence at New Ground, the St. Ann's workhouse gang (of convict slaves) was employed in digging cane-holes on the plantation. I had thus frequent opportunities of seeing and conversing with them. I shall never forget the impression I received from the first near view of these wretched people. The son of the captain, or superintendent of the workhouse (a person named Drake), accompanied me to the field the first day I went out to see this gang; and, as we went along, he remarked that I should probably be somewhat shocked by their appearance, but ought to bear in mind that these negroes were convicted malefactors—rebels, thieves, and felons. On approaching the spot I witnessed indeed a most affecting and appalling spectacle. The gang, consisting of forty-five negroes, male and female, were all chained by the necks in couples; and in one instance I observed a man and a woman chained together. Two stout drivers were standing over them, each armed both with a cart-whip and a cat-o'-nine tails. Nearly the whole gang were working without any covering on the upper part of their bodies; and on going up to them, with a view to closer inspection, I found that their backs, from the shoulders to the buttocks, were scarred and lacerated in all directions, by the frequent application of the cat and the cart-whip, which the drivers used at discretion, independently of severer floggings by order of the superintendent. I could not find a single one who did not bear on his body evident marks of this savage discipline. Some were marked with large weals, and with what in Yorkshire we should call *wrethes*, or ridges of flesh healed over. Others were crossed with long scabbed scars across the buttocks; on others, again, the gashes were raw and recent. Altogether it was the most horrid sight that ever my eyes beheld. One of them had on a coarse shirt or smock frock, which was actually dyed red with his blood. The drivers struck some of them severely while I was present for falling behind the rank in their work.

I asked one of the drivers what were the offences for which these people had been condemned. He replied that some of them were convicts from Trelawney parish, who had been concerned in the late rebellion; others were thieves and runaways; and, pointing out three

individuals (two men and a woman), he added that these had been taken up while martial law was in force—*for praying*. I asked if I might be permitted to speak to these three persons; and, meeting with no objection, I went forward and conversed with them. One of them, whose name was Rogers, in reply to my enquiries, informed me that he had been condemned to the workhouse gang for meeting with other negroes for prayer. The other man, whose name I have forgot, told me that this was the second time that he had been sent to work in chains solely for this offence—namely, joining with some of his friends and relatives in social prayer to his Maker and Redeemer! In order to assure myself further of the truth of this extraordinary fact, I made enquiry respecting it of some of the most intelligent negroes on New Ground estate, to whom the particulars connected with these people's condemnation were known, and received such full corroboration of their statement as left me no doubt whatever of its truth. Indeed I soon found good reason to believe that on many estates there are few offences for which the unhappy slaves are punished with more certainty or severity than *praying*.

Drake, the superintendent of this workhouse gang, came frequently to New Ground, while they were employed there, to see that they did sufficient work (for it was paid for by the piece); and one day he was invited by the overseer to dine with us. After dinner, while he and I were standing at the door, he proceeded to abuse the friends of negro emancipation in England in very violent terms, and added, that if ever I uttered a word unfriendly to them (the slave holders), he would have great pleasure in cutting my head off. Then, extending his arm, and pointing to his miserable gang, who were at work, full in view, at no great distance, he uttered a tremendous oath, and said—"Oh! if I had but Buxton and Lushington chained by the necks in yonder gang, I would *cure* them—that would I, by G—! We would be all right," he added, "if these devils would but let us alone."—This man, Drake, as I was told by the overseer, has a salary of £500 currency.

I may here notice a few other particulars illustrative of the Jamaica plantation system, which fell under my observation.

On New Ground estate there were about fifteen or sixteen religious negroes who became personally known to me, and I heard that there were others. Those that I knew were Baptists and Wesleyans. After they found they might have confidence in me, they often expressed

their deep regret for the banishment of the missionaries. While I was there they durst not be found praying together. If they had, they would have been sure of a flogging. One of the proprietors in England (my relative) had told me that I might preach to the slaves on the estate, and attend to their religious instruction; but I soon found that this would not be permitted by their own Colonial agents. Indeed the attorney, at our very first interview, expressly prohibited me so much as to mention religion to the negroes.

On Sunday there was no religious observance whatever on the estate, nor did I see or hear of any religious observance on any estate in that parish. The whites usually occupy Sunday in visits to their brother overseers and book-keepers on other estates; or if at home, in playing at draughts and quoits. The negroes were all at work on their provision grounds, or in carrying their provisions to market, except the cooper's gang, who were at work for the estate, but for wages on that day, as the overseer assured me. The negroes receive only a few salt herrings from the estate, and must necessarily employ the Sundays in cultivating their provision grounds. The law allows them only twenty-six week-days in the year for this necessary work.

In week-days the negroes always went to their work before daylight in the morning; on an average about five o'clock or a quarter past five. They left off after dusk, or from a quarter to half-past six in the evening. They had half an hour for breakfast, and sometimes an hour for dinner, but generally not a full hour. During crop, which was proceeding while I was there, they worked in spells the whole of every alternate night; that is to say, the spell that commenced on Monday morning got no sleep till Tuesday night, working all day in the fields and all night in the boiling-house.

The sufferings of the slaves from this hard and continuous labour, and from the continual floggings of the drivers to exact it, are severe beyond description. When they are digging cane holes, they generally work all in a row; and it frequently happens that the strong negroes outstrip the weaker ones. Then it is that the drivers (who stand *in front* of the gang in holeing, but *behind* in cane-cutting,) march up to those who have fallen back in their work, and flog them on to further exertion; the drivers being themselves liable to be flogged, if the prescribed work is not duly executed by their gang. I have seen the drivers put down slaves in the field, and inflict at

their own discretion, from six to twelve lashes with the cart-whip. I have seen them order females to stand at a convenient distance, and flog them as long as they saw fit. I have frequently seen the boatswain (as the driver at the boiling-house is called) flog old and young, male and female, in this manner. One night I saw this driver flog a female slave very severely, and one blow which struck her in the face caused her to scream out violently. Upon enquiry I found that this woman had a child in the hot-house (or hospital), and she had ventured to leave her work a little earlier than usual to see her sick child. For this she received the punishment. On another occasion, I saw this same boatswain put down a very handsome brown girl, and give her ten lashes. The overseer was with me at the time, and looked on, without making any remark. Another time I saw the head driver, a very powerful man, give a tremendous cut with the cart-whip to a female about fifty years of age, who was cutting canes with the great gang. The overseer and one of the book-keepers were standing by with me, but neither took the least notice. In fact, these floggings were taking place incessantly upon the working negroes; insomuch that I came to this conclusion, after some observation,—that the slaves suffered more in the aggregate from the *driving* in the field than from the severer regular punishments inflicted by order of the overseer and book-keepers. The drivers invariably flog negroes severely who happen to be too late in coming out in the morning; and it frequently happens, that when they oversleep their time, the negroes, for fear of punishment, run away for days or weeks from the estate. When they do return, as they generally do after a short space, it is with the certainty of encountering a tremendous flogging from the overseer, and being condemned to sleep every night in the stocks for weeks running. I have frequently seen six or seven of these runaways turned out of the stocks in a morning, taken to the field to cut canes, and then brought back at night to be again locked into the stocks. The fear of punishment, I was told, was the ordinary cause of their becoming runaways.

The tyrannical severity of the system may be aptly illustrated by another little incident which I shall here mention. One Sunday afternoon, while I was sitting, as usual, with the overseer at the open window of the hall, an old negro woman, apparently upwards of sixty years of age, came forward, and begged leave to tell her story to

"Busha." She proceeded to state that she was now old and stiff; that she had some infirmity in her knees, which she bared to exhibit to him; that she was no longer able to stand the field labour; and under these circumstances she pleaded to be allowed to "sit down"—that is, to be released from the regular labour of the estate. The overseer refused her suit, ordered her two or three times to be gone, and said "she talked English too well." At length, on the old woman still continuing her importunity, he lost patience, called one of the domestic slaves, and ordered him to put the supplicant in the stocks. To the stocks accordingly she was instantly taken, and confined in them every night for a week; continuing to work as usual in the field by day. At length on the following Sunday, she was begged off by the head driver, and came to return thanks, in my presence, to the overseer for her release. And thus was quashed her supplication for mitigation of hard labour, and other supplicants intimidated from appearing.

On conversing with Mr. M'Lean, (as I frequently did when I first went to New Ground) respecting the extreme severity of the system pursued on that estate, he assured me that he was far from being a harder task-master than other overseers on sugar plantations; and to convince me of this he told me of "severities" (or rather atrocities) exercised on other estates in the same parish, far beyond any which I witnessed on New Ground. I also heard of extraordinary instances of cruelty from others; and I was told, by a resident in St. Andrew's parish, that the floggings there were more severe than in St. Ann's; switches of the prickly ebony being frequently used after the cart-whip. But I shall not attempt to detail what I learned only by hearsay, although on the evidence of persons implicated in supporting the system. I can only vouch, of course, for what I myself witnessed; and that most assuredly I have rather softened than exaggerated.

The open and avowed licentiousness of the plantation whites disgusted me almost as much as the cruelty of the system. At New Ground, the overseer, book-keepers, and head carpenter, all lived in the habitual practice of gross and unblushing profligacy. The tremendous *moral* tyranny that may be, and unquestionably often is, exercised in the uncontrolled indulgence of this brutalizing vice, is as obvious as it is appalling. One of the book-keepers voluntarily mentioned to me, that he had had twelve "negro wives" within six months. I saw another of the whites on this estate give

his "housekeeper" (concubine), a cruel beating with a supplejack while she was in a state of pregnancy, and for a very trifling fault. For refusing to degrade myself by complying with "the custom of the country," as it was lightly termed, in this point, I was looked upon, as I soon perceived, with mingled contempt and suspicion by the plantation whites generally.

I shall now mention the circumstances which led to my abandonment of the views I had in going out to Jamaica, and obliged me to return to England, after so short a residence.

After I had been about a week on New Ground estate, I had an interview at St. Ann's Bay with the attorney or agent of the proprietors, to whose patronage I had been recommended by my relative in England. I told him that from what I had seen of a planter's life I felt myself to be but ill adapted for that profession, and that I had resolved to abandon all thoughts of it; but, as I had neither friend nor acquaintance save himself in that part of the island, I should feel much indebted to him if he would allow me to remain, as a resident merely, on the estate until I could hear from a correspondent in Kingston, to whom I had written, requesting him to make every possible exertion to procure me employment in a store, or any other creditable occupation, by which I might earn a livelihood unconnected with the plantation system. The attorney asked the name of the gentleman to whom I had written. I told him it was Mr. Pennock, the Wesleyan missionary; and informed him that I was a member of that Society myself, and had occasionally officiated as a local preacher before I left England. The attorney seemed a good deal disconcerted by this information. He assured me that Mr. Pennock could do nothing to assist me; and added, that such was the feeling of the inhabitants of Jamaica against the sectarians, that he himself, though he was the man of the greatest influence in that parish, would be exposed to great odium—perhaps peril—if the planters knew that he was patronizing a person of my character. "They would think nothing," he said, pointing to the sea, "of throwing me in *there* for that, and for no other offence." As, however, I had been sent out to him by the proprietors, he added, that he would do the best he could to promote my interests. Meanwhile he advised me to remain on the estate, where, he said, as I disliked the system, I should have nothing to do with it; but charged me to let no person know

that I was a Methodist; and, (as I have already mentioned) he strictly prohibited me from attempting to instruct the negroes, or to say a single word to them about religion. In other respects he appeared friendly, and promised to give me a letter to Mr. Whitehorn, an attorney at Kingston, a relative of his, with a view to find me some other occupation.

About a week after this, I was informed by a neighbouring book-keeper that it had been discovered by the address of my letter to Mr. Pennock, that I was in correspondence with the sectarians; and that some gentlemen at St. Ann's Bay had formed a plan to tar and feather me, if they could find a convenient opportunity. This information I communicated by letter to the attorney, who resided on a property of his own, about twenty miles distant from New Ground. He immediately sent for me to come to him, warning me not to travel by the bay, for fear of the Colonial Unionists, but to come round by the mountain road. I went accordingly, and remained a night with him. I then proceeded to Kingston in search of employment, and saw Mr. Pennock, and other persons who were very desirous to promote my views; but meeting with no success, I was obliged to return to New Ground. I subsequently made another journey to Kingston, but with no better result.

At another interview which I soon afterwards had with the attorney, I told him I thought it very hard, that after having been at so much expense in coming out to Jamaica, I could obtain no situation in the island merely because I was a Methodist. He then spoke of another charge he had in view for me; and mentioned also, that Mr. Hamilton Brown was desirous of giving me employment, but that he was so much intimidated by the threats that were held out against all who favoured Sectarians, that he durst not venture to do it.

He further assured me, that unless I would agree to enrol myself as a member of the Colonial Church Union, and renounce "even the very appearance of sectarianism," he saw no likelihood of my being enabled to obtain or hold any situation in the colony; adding emphatically, that unless I did this, he could not guarantee any thing in regard to me—no, not even life itself. On this occasion I expressed my surprise, that the planters should be so *outrageously* partial to Churchmen in opposition to the Sectarians, when they could not be ignorant that many eminent ministers and members of the Church of

England were labouring for the abolition of Slavery with not less zeal than the Wesleyans or Baptists. The attorney replied significantly, (and his words made a deep impression on me) "It is an opinion amongst us, but one which we do not wish to acknowledge or to be known, that *slavery and knowledge are incompatible.*" These were this gentleman's own words—a man of whom I would not willingly speak unkindly, for I was always hospitably received, and otherwise kindly treated by him;* but as respects his unscrupulous support of the Colonial system, I leave the reader to judge for himself.

On this and other occasions I thought it my duty to acquaint the attorney with my observations and my feelings, in regard to the cruel floggings and severe treatment generally, which I had witnessed at New Ground. He admitted the facts, but said that plantation work could not be carried on without the cart-whip. He moreover laboured hard to convince me that the flogging did not injure the health of the negroes.

I also told him of the exceeding immorality and licentiousness which I had witnessed; mentioning, in substance, the facts previously detailed. He replied, that that was a thing which they (the attorneys) must "wink at." He said he had but two married overseers under him upon the several properties he managed, and he intended never to have another; for (he remarked) the overseers, book-keepers, and head carpenters, generally took for their mistresses the sisters or daughters of the drivers or carpenters; by which means, if any plot was hatching amongst the slaves, some intimation of it was almost certain to be conveyed by these channels to the whites upon the plantation. And for the sake of such a wretched security, this gentleman, in the true spirit of the system (though in other respects ap-

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* I have not given this gentleman's *name*, from a reluctance to hurt the feelings of an individual whose hospitality I have enjoyed; but I cannot conscientiously suppress his *opinions*, which serve so well to illustrate the colonial system. If a man, in manners so much the gentleman, and in other respects so estimable, is, as a supporter of that system, necessarily led to countenance, or to "wink at," the enormities I have feebly attempted to describe, what, I ask, is to be expected from its subordinate administrators, who are continually exposed to all the demoralizing influences of slavery? What, indeed, but the frightful wickedness and cruelty which are its actual fruits!

parently a benevolent and honourable man) was content to "wink at" the wickedness.

Soon after this, a person of my acquaintance came up from St. Ann's Bay, and advised me to leave New Ground estate without delay, because the members of the Colonial Church Union down at the Bay were determined to do me some mischief. I felt somewhat alarmed on receiving this intimation, and expressed my apprehensions to the overseer. He replied, that there was no occasion for me to leave the estate—that I need not be at all afraid, for (as he vehemently swore) he would sooner lose his own life than deliver me up to my enemies. How far Mr. M'Lean was sincere in his assurances and professions I shall not pretend positively to determine. I subsequently thought I saw good cause to believe him not averse to any scheme that would lead to my removal *quietly* from New Ground estate;—of nothing worse, as regards myself, have I the least reason to suspect him. But, at the period I now advert to, I did not entertain even the suspicion I have now expressed; and, moreover, I was at a great loss what course to adopt, for if I left the estate, I knew not well where else to betake myself.

About a fortnight after my return from my last visit to the attorney, a deputation from St. Ann's Colonial Church Union waited upon me. This took place on one of the militia muster days. I observed that day that a number of overseers and book-keepers called at New Ground estate, as they returned from muster, and I noticed a great deal of whispering among them. Just at dusk two persons, under the character of a deputation from the Colonial Church Union, made their appearance, and demanded an interview with me. The overseer introduced them—a Mr. Dicken and a Mr. Brown. The former I had previously met with, but to my salutation he now made no response. Mr. Brown was spokesman, and commenced by informing me that they came as a deputation from more than a hundred gentlemen at St. Ann's Bay, to state to me,—1st. That they had heard I had been leading the minds of the slaves astray by holding forth doctrines of a tendency to make them discontented with their present condition. 2ndly. That I was a Methodist, and that my relative who had sent me to Jamaica was a d——d Methodist. And, 3rdly. That they had a barrel of tar down at the Bay to tar and feather me, as I well deserved, and that they "would do so, by G—d."

In reply, I acknowledged that I was undoubtedly a Methodist; but added, mildly, that I was altogether unconscious of any act, since I arrived in the island, whereby I could have given any reasonable offence to the planters or any other class of men; and I begged them to specify my offences. Mr. Brown than stated, that in the first place, I had written a letter to the Rev. Thomas Pennock, Wesleyan Missionary. 2ndly. That in a letter I had written to Mr. ———, the attorney, I had said, "The Lord reward you for the kindnesses you have shewn me, and grant you in health and wealth long to live." 3rdly. That I had said to a slave who had opened a gate to me at a certain place, "The Lord bless you." 4thly. That I had asked the drivers of the workhouse gang questions respecting the offences of the negroes of that gang. 5thly. That I had made private remarks about the way in which I had seen Mr. M'Lean, the overseer, treat the slaves. (Here Dicken, who was an overseer at Winsor, a neighbouring plantation, told me he had two negroes at that moment in the stocks, and added, with a brutal oath,* if I would come over in the morning he would let me see them properly flogged.) 6thly. That I had preached to a hundred and fifty slaves at one time.—To all these charges I pleaded guilty, except the last, which was without foundation—without even a shadow of truth; though, if it had been true, it would have been difficult for me to admit its criminality. Dicken then drew his hand across my throat, and swore by his Maker that he would be the first man to cut it if I should dare to talk to the slaves in the same way again. He then pulled out a pistol, which he cocked, and held out (but did not point it at my person); saying, that if he was to fire it off, there would be twenty men in the house in one minute, ready to do whatever they chose with me. Mr. M'Lean, the overseer, here spoke up, and said, with considerable vehemence, that before he would see me abused he would rather have a ball through his own breast.

I then told them that there was no occasion for violence; that I was quite willing, under the circumstances in which I found myself, to leave the island by the very first conveyance; and should be glad

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* The planters of all ranks, with very rare exceptions, are shocking swearers; the more vulgar sort interlarding their profaneness with the most revolting obscenity.

if they and their friends would only permit me to do so quietly. They promised to report this reply to their Society, the Colonial Church Union, and so departed.

It was agreed that I should sail in the ship "Huskisson," and that I might remain on the estate till that vessel was ready; but having been seen conversing with Mr. Watkis, a Wesleyan, and a brother of the member of the Colonial Assembly of that name, the attorney was informed of this (no other fault was alleged), and he sent word to the overseer to enforce my departure *immediately*. I was hurried off accordingly; and, in my way from St. Ann's to Annotto Bay, I saw the attorney once more. He then told me that it was necessary, for both his sake and mine, that I should leave the country; and apologized for his hurrying my departure by stating that he had recently received many violent letters on my account from the Colonial Unionists, threatening to pull his house about his ears, as other houses had been pulled about the ears of the owners, on similar grounds elsewhere.

I proceeded from St. Ann's to Annotto Bay to await the sailing of the vessel; and, while thus detained, I had a pretty severe attack of the country fever, which confined me for ten days. On the 8th of December I sailed from Jamaica, having been just three months and six days on the island.

I leave the facts thus plainly related, as they fell under my observation during this short residence, to the reader's calm reflection. They will sufficiently display the character of Negro Slavery, as it now exists in Jamaica, without any comment of mine. But as I have mentioned that I left England with a persuasion that the general condition of the West India slaves was, on the whole, much preferable to that of the children in our factories, it is proper to state the conviction with which I have returned,—which is this. The condition of the factory children is certainly very deplorable, and calls loudly for amelioration; and I shall most cordially rejoice to see the friends of Negro Emancipation co-operating with the friends of Factory Regulation, in carrying the Ten Hours' Bill speedily through Parliament. But between the cases of the factory child and the plantation slave there can be no just comparision. The former is very bad: the latter is INFINITELY WORSE.

APPENDIX.

London, March 28, 1833.

Some of Mr. Whiteley's friends, whom he has consulted in regard to this publication, being of opinion that a few testimonials may be usefully appended to it, in order to give it due weight with readers unacquainted wtth the writer's character, he has been induced to place at their disposal a few letters and certificates, from which they have selected the following. The originals are left in the hands of the publishers (Messrs. Hatchard), and may be freely perused by any person who desires to see them.

I. *Extract of a letter from Richard Oastler, Esq., of Fixby Hall, near Huddersfield, to the Rev. Mr. Ellis, Moravian Minister, Fairfield, Jamaica.*

"*London, July* 8, 1832.

"My Dear Sir,

"I have this day called in Fetter Lane, hoping to find my old friend, Peter Latrobe, but unfortunately he was not at home. I intended that he should introduce my friend, the bearer of this, to you; but as that may not be, receive Mr. Henry Whiteley in love from an old friend. He is a young man whom I much admire; he has been working with me in forwarding the emancipation of the factory slaves here; and now his lot is cast among the poor blacks. Well—he is a Methodist local preacher, and he intends to preach the gospel to the slaves; and, being of opinion that you would be glad to give him your advice and help, I felt particularly wishful to place him under your direction. May our dear Saviour make him useful.

(*Signed*) "Richard Oastler."

"Tell your poor slaves to pray for the poor factory children in England, and to petition for their emancipation. R. O."

II. *Extract of a letter from the Rev. John Kingdon, Baptist Missionary, to John Elliott, Esq., Denmark Hill, near London.*

"*Kingston, Jamaica, November* 27, 1832.

"My Dear Christian Brother,

"The bearer of this, Mr. Whiteley, is about to return to England, should his Heavenly Father restore him from the severe fever he is now labouring under; and as he appears to be a very pious man, of your own denomination, and one who has endured well 'a great fight of afflictions' for the sake of Jesus Christ, I know not to whom in town I could more appropriately introduce him in his present difficulties. A few months since he came out with the view of

taking the situation of book-keeper, on a property in St. Ann's parish, which a relative is interested in; all the while hoping to be permitted to 'preach the unsearchable riches of Christ' to the poor dear negroes. If he could have smothered the flame from heaven which glowed within, he might have quietly pursued the former project; but because the love of Christ constrained him to shun or reprove the wicked, he was at once denounced as a 'sectarian,' and treated with barbarity, as you will hear from himself. Thus is he compelled to return to England, after sustaining serious expenses. * * * * *

"I expect my brother, who takes this to Mr. Whiteley, to go this evening.

"I remain, &c.

(Signed) "JOHN KINGDON."

III.

"*Heckmondwike, March* 23, 1833.

"We, the undersigned, hereby certify, that the bearer, Mr. Henry Whiteley, a native of this place, and resident here, until his departure for Jamaica, in July last, is, in our opinion, a highly respectable young man, of unimpeachable integrity as a man and as a Christian :—

(Signed) "C. ETHERINGTON, merchant, Heckmondwike.
"HENRY OATES, ditto ditto.
"JOHN ROYLE, wine merchant, ditto.
"RAWSON WEBSTER, surgeon, ditto.
"THOMAS HIRST, woolstapler, ditto.
"G. THOMPSON, minister, ditto.
"HENRY BEAN, minister, ditto.
"JONATHAN POPPLEWELL, grocer, ditto.
"Robert MARTIN, minister, ditto.
"JOSEPH M'CREERY, minister, ditto.

"The bearer, Mr. Henry Whiteley, is not personally known to me, but I have for many years known his father, and several of the merchants and others, whose signatures are given above, as persons of respectability and highly worthy of credit. *(Signed)* "HAMMOND ROBERTSON,
"Incumbent of (the adjacent church) Liveredge."

"I have not known the bearer, Mr. Henry Whiteley, but can testify to the respectability of the persons who have signed their names to the above character.

(Signed) "BENJAMIN HUTCHINSON, Curate."

London : S. Bagster, Jun., Printer, 14, Bartholomew Close.

THE

SPEECHES

OF

Mr. BARRETT AND OF Mr. BURGE,

AT A GENERAL MEETING

OF

PLANTERS, MERCHANTS, AND OTHERS,

INTERESTED IN THE

WEST-INDIA COLONIES;

ASSEMBLED AT THE THATCHED-HOUSE TAVERN,
ON THE 18TH MAY, 1833.

PRINTED AT THE REQUEST OF THE MEETING.

LONDON:
PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY A. J. VALPY,
RED LION COURT, FLEET STREET;
AND SOLD BY ALL BOOKSELLERS.
1833.

GENERAL MEETING.

18th May, 1833.

"UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED,

"That Mr. BARRETT and Mr. BURGE be requested to permit the Speeches this day made by them to be printed."

MR. BARRETT'S SPEECH,

AT A GENERAL MEETING OF THE WEST-INDIA BODY.

My Lord Combermere,

I have to move, for the adoption of the meeting, if it shall think fit, a Petition to the House of Lords. We have already assented to address the King, to whom we look up as our last hope and refuge, should the two Houses of Parliament be deaf to our remonstrances. These measures are a part of those which it has become necessary to resort to, in defence of our dearest interests,—threatened with immediate and total ruin by His Majesty's Ministers. The indignation of the House and of the country has been invoked upon our heads by the Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies. As the official organ of Government, he has denounced us to the world, as holding our fellow beings in hopeless slavery; as inflicting upon them great cruelties; and as stubbornly refusing to listen to the voice of the people of England, which has long and loudly demanded the melioration of their condition.

I was under the gallery of the House of Commons when Mr. Stanley made the speech which

introduced his resolutions for Emancipation. I had in other times been a witness of the debates, and I had heard Ministers of the Crown bring forward measures affecting the interests of particular bodies; but I must declare, from all that I had seen, and much more that I had read, I never could have imagined that an official organ of the Government would have allowed himself such latitude of vituperation and high colouring as was indulged in by the Right Honourable Secretary. It was the address of the Public Prosecutor against the Prisoner at the bar, instead of the well-balanced Charge of the Judge, weighing carefully the evidence on both sides, and endeavouring to allay and not excite the feeelings. From the beginning to the close of Mr. Stanley's speech, he proceeded from one topic of reproach to another; holding up the Colonists to universal odium, declaiming against their contumacy, their insolence, and their barbarities. Nor was he content with general assertions:—fortunately for us, fortunately for truth, the Right Honourable Secretary endeavoured to support his accusations by a reference to facts. He laboured, with all his eloquence and ingenuity, to make his audience believe that the Colonial Legislatures had proudly and scornfully rejected the advice of Parliament to mitigate the condition of their Slaves; that they had disdainfully contemned the admonitions and warnings of the King's Ministers; and had met the general cry of the British people for Emancipation with contempt and defiance. If

the Local Legislatures have stood still while all around them were in motion, they may deserve some punishment for their obstinacy and their folly; but the fact is not so: and if the meeting will honour me with a small portion of their time, I will show how cruelly those bodies have been maligned in the speech of the Right Honourable Secretary. In the observations I am about to make, I may be compelled to meet the violence of his language by expressions less measured than I would wish to use when speaking of a gentleman of Mr. Stanley's station and character. I will not say that he has wilfully misrepresented us. It is evident that he entered the Colonial Office ignorant of our institutions, and ignorant he has remained. His prompters have taken advantage of his ignorance, and have put into his mouth the grossest mis-statements. But while I can find some apology for his want of knowledge, I can find none for his want of candour and fairness. As if the act of spoliation he contemplated was not sufficiently dreadful, at the instant that he proposed his project to plunder us of our property, he consigned our name to everlasting infamy. Hundreds of thousands of petitioners, and the multitude of electioneering pledges, had not done enough to prejudicate our cause; but the Right Honourable Secretary must crown our injuries, by borrowing the errors, the prejudices, and the abuse of the petitioners, and adding to their effect the powerful weight of his eloquence and autho-

rity. It had been more humane and just, more courageous and statesmanlike, to have thrown his official mantle round the Colonists: but the Secretary thought otherwise.

If Slavery is an offence which ought to be discontinued, it is an offence common to the nation. The army which conquered Jamaica, which first garrisoned and then settled that island, carried with them no slaves: they were planters before they became slave-owners. Slaves were sent to them in English ships; torn from Africa by English dealers and spoilers. English laws promoted the traffic, and English capital maintained it. So greedy, in those days, was this country of the trade in Man, that shortly after the Restoration, a grant of land in the colony (of Jamaica) could only be obtained on condition of cultivating it by Negro Slaves. The soldier carried to Jamaica nothing but his arms; when he became a planter, he had no resource but his own strength and industry. He did not go in search of the Negro to Africa; the Negro was brought to him: and the King of England, by and with the advice of his Council, compelled him to purchase, if he desired to escape from the condition of a daily labourer, and aspired to be an owner of land and a freeholder. Thus the planter became a slave-proprietor not by the choice of his will, but by the force of law. It is not fair,—it is not honest,—it is unjust and cruel for the people of England to reproach the planter with the unavoidable consequences of their own

act, and to load him with obloquy at the moment that they are about to make him the victim of their guilt.

The Colonial Secretary admitted the vastness of the interests which are involved in this question: he admits, that on its successful settlement depend the lives and fortunes of a large proportion of our fellow-subjects, and the welfare, both spiritual and temporal, of 800,000 slaves. By a hasty, an imperfect, or ill-considered measure, the numerous body of persons dependent on the Colonies, who reside in England, may be ruined; the free inhabitants of the Colonies may be massacred, or be engaged in civil war with the newly-emancipated slaves; and those slaves themselves, that we design to civilise and to make happy, may be driven back to the barbarism, the vices, and the sufferings of savage life. None of these events can happen without inflicting on England a heavy loss in wealth, in commerce, in reputation, and in substantial power. The Right Honourable Gentleman is not only aware of the hazard that hangs upon this "mighty experiment," as he terms it, but he perceives "the influence that its successful or unsuccessful issue must have on millions of foreign subjects." Vast and terrific is the responsibility assumed by the Right Honourable Gentleman. Uncontrollable and unavoidable ought to be the circumstances which compel him to play for so deep a stake; and most cautious and guarded, and almost unimpeachable, should be

the plan, which is to pass through so many perils; a plan which is meant to confer a great boon, but may inflict boundless and intolerable wrong.

The overwhelming necessity which, in the opinion of the Right Honourable Secretary, demands the incurring of these dangers, is, to use his own words, "the universal expression of feeling which pervades the country, that Slavery should be abolished." The Right Honourable Gentleman adds: "There never was a time when the determination of the people was more absolutely or more irresistibly expressed, because it was founded on that deep religious feeling, on that solemn conviction of principle, which admitted of no palliation or compromise, and which pronounced itself in a voice to which no minister could be deaf." *

The petitions and desires of the people are not to be lightly regarded, nor are they to be granted without inquiry. It is the duty of Parliament to resort to those sources of knowledge which are closed to the general access, and to weigh those results which the people overlook, and especially when, as the Right Honourable Gentleman has declared, the fate of millions of foreigners may be influenced, and consequently our external relations implicated by our experiments. The petitions of the people, however universal, are not the irresistible plea for legislating in this matter, which warrants the Government in exposing ourselves

* The quotations from Mr. Stanley's speech are taken from the Times newspaper.

and foreign nations to the misfortunes which the Right Honourable Gentleman describes as sure to follow unsuccessful legislation. I know not if the remark of Mr. Stanley was directed to any particular foreign state; but this I know, that the Cabinet of Washington is watching the progress of events in Jamaica; its emissaries are in the island. The late disputes between North Carolina and the General Government would not so peacefully have been arranged, but for the jealousy and apprehensions with which the slave-holding states regard the Emancipation mania of this country.

On this subject I will read to the meeting an extract from a pamphlet written by an eminent American. It is entitled, "The Address of the Washington Society to the People of South Carolina," and is printed at Charleston.

"It has been truly said that South Carolina could not dispense with a standing army to defend her from a danger at once so imminent and appalling, that it becomes us no longer to shrink from its examination. *The British West Indies are about to become an Archipelago of free blacks.* That nation, which is to be the ally of South Carolina, is strenuously engaged in emancipating the Slaves in her Colonies; and the moment we place ourselves under her protection, as we will and must do, if we secede from the Union, the philanthropic projects of that people will be extended to us; and we shall find it no easy matter, with the aid of the small army which we can afford to pay, to preserve our

property and maintain domestic tranquillity. Look at what is going on in England, where pledges are exacted from the candidates for Parliament, to make a commencement in the great work of Emancipation. *Look at what is passing near us in the British West-India Colonies, where servile war and desolation have been let loose upon those once peaceful and flourishing islands.*"

I pretend not to judge of foreign politics: it may be our British policy that the United States should develope her vast resources, and reign the dominant power in the New World. Let this delirium of philanthropy continue to rule our councils, and the dominion of the United States will have no other limit than their own moderation; a virtue, by the bye, of which their short republican history affords not a solitary example.

The Right Honourable Gentleman has attempted to prove the guilt and folly of the colonist in resisting Emancipation, by citing passages from the debates of the House of Commons. These speeches were delivered near thirty years ago, on the abolition of the Slave Trade. It is not very clear that the speeches of parliamentary orators are the best guides either in morals or in politics. Authoritative axioms are laid down to serve some immediate purpose; and if, in the recorded speeches of the same member, contradictions and inconsistencies are not to be found, which indeed seldom happens, contradictions at least are sure to be found in the speeches of the opposite party. The Right

Honourable Gentleman has not been very fortunate in his search for great names to back his argument, even in the immense mass which comprises the debates of the House, where every subject has been discussed, and in every possible way. Mr. Wyndham said—"He wished for nothing more at present than the abolition of the Slave Trade; but he did not hesitate to say that *when the proper period arrived, and the consent of other powers could be obtained* for its abolition, Slavery itself ought not to be suffered to exist amongst the institutions of any civilised state." Mr. Wyndham's evidence is worth nothing to Mr. Secretary Stanley; for not only is the consent of foreign powers not obtained for the abolition of Slavery, but the Slave Trade itself is pursued to as great an extent, and with more cruelty than ever. The last treaty for the extinction of this horrible commerce was very lately signed; but the trade is the more inhuman and exterminating, because it is without the regulations of lawful commerce. France has reluctantly assented to another treaty to perfect her former stipulations; but neither treaties nor fleets will guard the coasts of Cuba and the Brazils from fresh importations of African Slaves. Out of one hundred and six ships which left the Havannah in 1832, ninety-seven returned in safety, *richly* freighted with cargoes of that unfortunate race. The period which Mr. Wyndham hoped for is still distant. The horrors of the Slave Trade have not abated. Slavery yet prevails in every European

colony, and no European power is prepared to join with us in its extinction. Another authority of the Right Honourable Secretary is Lord Grenville: his Lordship said, on bringing forward his motion for abolition in 1807, "that the first step from slavery to freedom was effected by the slaves becoming praedial or attached to the land, and that from thence they ascended to liberty." Will the Right Honourable Secretary say, that the Colonies have been invited to attach the slaves to the soil? or, will he not rather allow that the interests of the British creditor have not, up to the present time, permitted that this first step to liberty should be taken by the Colonies?

Mr. Secretary Stanley's plan goes far beyond attaching the Negroes to the soil. They are at once to enter on the exercise of all the privileges of Englishmen: they are, even during their apprenticeship, to serve on juries, and in the militia.

Mr. Stanley enlists Mr. Fox in his argument, and quotes but a single passage from that great man's speeches:—"The abolition of the Slave Trade will lead to the abolition of Slavery in the West Indies." True, Mr. Fox looked to the abolition of Slavery itself, but not by the sacrifice of national faith and justice. The Right Honourable Secretary can produce no passage from Mr. Fox's speeches, which can be interpreted to approve of such an act of spoliation as that which Parliament is called upon to sanction. So far is Mr. Fox from lending the force of his character and opi-

nions to this measure, that in a debate on a motion of Mr. Francis for regulating Slavery in the Colonies, (I forget the words, it is so long since I read the passage,) he (Mr. Fox) said it was the duty of Parliament to advise and admonish the Colonies to ameliorate the condition of their slaves; but if the Colonies regarded not the admonition, the only course left to Parliament was to leave them to the evil of their ways. On another occasion this statesman exclaimed, that to legislate for the Colonies was "monstrous in conception and impracticable in execution."

It will be seen by the quotations from these speeches of Lord Grenville, Mr. Wyndham, and Mr. Fox, that those statesmen had but an uncertain and distant glimpse of Negro freedom; nor can the Right Honourable Secretary adduce other Parliamentary evidence to support his view of the subject, till the year 1823. In that year, for the first time, and not before, as the Right Honourable Secretary would intimate, did the nation declare by the voice of Parliament, that Slavery should cease in the British Colonies. Exactly ten years since, and not eleven, as the Right Honourable Secretary had said, were the Colonists warned that the principle of abolition was recognised by Parliament. But the Colonial Secretary, in referring to Mr. Canning's memorable Resolutions, has omitted to notice the reservation of the rights of property. His right of property in his Slaves being reserved, in these Resolutions,

to the planter, is it surprising that he has waited the redemption of the Parliamentary pledge before he complied with the principle of abolition which that pledge was intended to limit and to make safe? The Right Honourable Secretary, having mustered these authorities, breaks out into a strain of angry declamation against the Colonial Legislatures: in a voice of passionate reproach he exclaims—"Those Resolutions declared that Parliament looked confidently forward, through the Local Legislatures adopting efficient measures of legislation, to the final termination of the system of Colonial Slavery, too long in existence. They had more than eleven years' experience of the effect upon the Colonial Legislatures of that emphatic expression of the wishes and voice of Parliament and the Mother Country, conveyed in the tone of friendly admonition, and strengthened by the voice of authority,—and what was the result? The Colonial Legislatures were deaf to the voice of friendly expostulation: they seemed to set at defiance the voice of authority." True, Parliament looked with confidence to the Local Legislatures for the extinction of Slavery, but not at the sole risk and loss of the Colonists. The Right Honourable Secretary, in dwelling on the expectations of Parliament from the Colonial Assemblies, abstains, no doubt undesignedly, now, and on all other occasions, from quoting that most vital part of the resolutions, which reserves the rights of property. If the House of Commons re-

fused, at the call of the Member for Weymouth, to decree Emancipation without security to the Colonies, can we be surprised that the Colonial Legislatures have been no less tenacious of private property—that property too belonging to their immediate constituents? Had the Right Honourable Secretary reflected on the duties which the Local Legislatures had to perform, together with the true intent and meaning of the resolutions of 1823,—which resolutions have never been revoked or remodelled, he would have expressed himself with less of violence and bitterness against those bodies. The reservation of the rights of property was renewed by the Lords in 1826, and by the Commons in 1832. Unless it can be shown that Parliament has taken proper measures to protect the Colonies from the ruin of their fortunes, the Colonial Legislatures are rather to be commended for their calm and resolute resistance to the wild innovations of the Colonial Office, than denounced for contumacy and insolence.

The Right Honourable Secretary, in his philippic against the Local Assemblies, resorts to a letter of Mr. Burke addressed to Mr. Dundas in 1792; and the value of the quotation consists in the opinion of Mr. Burke, that the "Laws of the Colonies are nothing worth, for they do not carry with them the executory principle." This citation serves as a preamble to the remarkable assertion that "the Colonies have done little *to mitigate the evils of Slavery, and that the little they have done* wants the executory principle." No proof is

offered of this deep offence—no support is sought to uphold this heavy charge against the Colonies, beyond the accidental and hasty opinion of Mr. Burke, expressed in the warmth of debate forty-one years ago. Were the Colonial Assemblies capable of passing laws to blind and mislead the people of England, they would deserve the odium which the Right Honourable Secretary has cast upon them. But the fault of these bodies seems to have been, in the eyes of the Right Honourable Secretary's predecessors in office, and in his own, that they have refused even a pretended and outward submission to their authority, but have manfully and openly fought the battle of their constituents, keeping clear of dishonest evasion, and avoiding also undistinguishing opposition to the views of Government. There is a paragraph in the speech of the Right Honourable Secretary not applicable to men who affect a hollow and insincere compliance with the behests of superior power. His words are—"The Colonial Legislatures are deaf to the voice of *friendly* expostulation; they seem to set at defiance the voice of authority." In another part of his speech the Right Honourable Secretary adds, in speaking of an Order in Council:—"They scornfully rejected it, they disdainfully refused to obey the suggestions of the Order." May we not conclude, what is indeed the truth, that these calumniated gentlemen courageously rejected those requisitions of the Colonial Department which overleapt the resolutions of Parliament, inasmuch as they in-

terfered with the rights of property; while they made enactments in perfect good faith to promote "the progressive improvement in the character of the Slave population, such as might prepare them for a participation in those civil rights and privileges which are enjoyed by other classes of His Majesty's subjects?"

The Right Honourable Secretary informed the House, that the Resolutions of 1823 were sent out to the Colonies in 1824, backed by the "*imperative command*" of an Order of Council. The Right Honourable Secretary's "upwards of eleven years" are now reduced to much less than nine, for these "imperative commands" were not sent down to the Assembly of Jamaica till the month of October, 1824. And what was the Assembly of Jamaica commanded at once to accomplish?

1. To abolish Sunday markets.
2. To admit Slave evidence.
3. To sanction marriage.
4. To abolish taxes on manumission.
5. To prevent the separation of families.
6. To regulate punishments.
7. To establish savings' banks.

It is not surprising that they hesitated to obey, without reflection, these imperative commands of the Colonial Office. The Order was sudden and unexpected; it was conveyed in an unusual mandatory tone. Time was required for consideration, and to prepare their constituents for this novel mode of government by Order in Coun-

cil. And it must not be forgotten that the Colonial Legislatures are freely chosen by the people; that purity of election has always existed in the West-India Islands; and, consequently, that the representatives of the people dare not to outrun or disregard the opinions of their electors. As Jamaica has been more particularly referred to by the Right Honourable Secretary, we will see if that great colony deserves all his angry denunciations. It has been already stated, that in November 1824 the resolutions of 1823, extended into several "suggestions," as they were termed, were sent down to the Assembly of Jamaica by the Duke of Manchester. Two laws were founded upon them. I will read to the meeting the Duke of Manchester's letter to Lord Bathurst, which will show his Grace's opinion of the laws, and the disposition of the Assembly of Jamaica to comply with the wishes of Government. The letter is dated 24th December, 1824.

"Two Acts have been passed, important in themselves as affording protection and encouragement to slaves, and more so as indicating an intention of doing more hereafter.

"The first Act protects slaves from all mesne process on the day allotted to them for the cultivation of their provisions, or to carry them to market. This exemption from mesne process will enable them to employ Sunday in a suitable manner, and will materially contribute to the extinction of the Sunday market.

"The other Act enables the owners of slaves to reward their services by manumission, notwithstanding entails and other settlements.

"*I am convinced that there is a very sincere desire to do, from time to time, what may appear practicable;* and if the Assembly have not done more now, it has arisen from the general belief that the Negro mind is still unsettled, and their designs of mischief not yet abandoned."

The Duke of Manchester, in the latter portion of his letter, refers to several conspiracies and risings which had taken place in different parts of the Colony. Compare his Grace's character of this Legislature with Mr. Stanley's speech, and I appeal to you, if, up to this time, they had merited the censures of the Government.

Twelve months afterwards, namely, on the 22nd of December, 1825, the Duke of Manchester again addressed the Colonial Secretary.

"A Bill was brought into the House for receiving the Evidence of Slaves: although this Bill was confined to cases of murder, treason, and mayhem, and guarded by provisions which, in the opinion of *the most intelligent portion of the community, and of those who possessed the largest stake in the country*, rendered it perfectly harmless, the clamour out of doors was so great, and the resolutions entered into at parochial meetings so strongly expressed the public feeling, that many members, whose sentiments were favourable to the measure, yielded to the opinion of their consti-

tuents, and voted against the Bill, which was lost by 24 to 13.

" A Bill has been passed of very trifling importance, relating to Bequests to Slaves, and enabling executors to obtain a discharge on payment of legacies bequeathed to slaves.

" A Deficiency Bill has been passed, leaving out the clause preventing slaves from keeping horses."

It is evident, from this letter, that the Jamaica Legislature did not, as the Secretary asserts, " set the voice of Parliament at defiance." Progress was making, though slowly, in melioration. The " most intelligent portion of the community, and those who possessed the largest stake," were ready to move onward, and even two laws were passed; the one, removing difficulties to the bequest of property to slaves; the other, abandoning the precaution, now become unnecessary, which restricted the possession of horses to free people.

It was in this stage of melioration that the subject was again canvassed in the House of Commons, which led, in 1826, to sending out eight bills. Of the reception of these bills in the Colonies, Mr. Stanley speaks thus: " Undoubtedly some of the Colonies had gone through the form of carrying the outline of the shadow of some of the bills into effect; but all had studiously avoided the substance, particularly in that important particular, the appointing as a protector of slaves some gentleman wholly unconnected with the Colonies, having no property in slaves, and there-

fore no interest opposed to their moral and political improvement; and, in fact, merely instituted some partial modifications of their own domestic regulations as a mere pretext, by means of which they might elude the real intentions of the Legislature. *The whole thing was on the face of it a mockery, an insolent mockery, of the wishes and feelings of the Mother Country.* It was true that in one or two of the Colonies, as a substitute for the efficient office of protector of slaves, there was appointed what was called a 'Council of Protection.' But who constituted that council? Were they persons having no interest in the continuance of slavery, because deriving no profit from it? No; far from it; this 'Council of Protection' of the rights and interests of the Negro was composed of magistrates, (two being a council,) themselves the possessors of slaves, and therefore having a direct unequivocal interest in the continuance of the present system, and, as having this direct and unequivocal interest, imbued with all the prejudices and sinister feelings of slave proprietors. In thus showing the mockery of the wishes and determination of Parliament perpetrated by the Colonial Legislatures, he did not mean to slur over the few beneficial regulations which one or two of them had made in reference to Sunday markets, and the observance of the Sabbath."

Here is a deliberate and solemn asseveration that of the eight bills submitted by the King's Ministers to the Colonies, not a single enact-

ment or recommendation was assented to, except "a few beneficial regulations, which one or two of the Legislatures had made in reference to Sunday markets." It is on this stubbornness of the Colonial Assemblies, on this defiance and mockery of the desires, and this neglect of the warnings of the House of Commons, that the Right Honourable Secretary demands the coercion of the Colonies. The House of Commons, jealous of power, like every public body, is artfully reminded by him of the contempt in which its supremacy has been held by the petty Legislatures of the dependencies. The House is told that they are mocked, insulted, and defied; and their authority is described as limited only by their own will: in the same breath, the idea of contumacious resistance is presented to them, and their means of punishing the contumacity are lauded and magnified. The passions of the House of Commons were to be arrayed against the rights, nay, the very existence, of the Colonies; and a Minister of the Crown was found rash enough to attempt the task, unappalled by the danger, or rather the certain ruin, which would follow the success of his daring, and unawed by the violation of truth and justice, which was necessary to accomplish this iniquitous object. Mr. Stanley knew, or rather, those who instructed him knew, that a declaration of the naked truth by a Minister of the Crown, from his place in Parliament, would have satisfied, not Parliament alone, but the minds of the

people, that the Colonial Legislatures did not deserve the contumely that had been heaped on them:—but it was not the policy of Ministers to preserve the Colonies; hence it is, that we have had the false and slanderous statements contained in this speech.

In 1826 a new Assembly met, carrying with them, it is to be presumed, the sentiments of their constituents on the expectations of the British people. The Right Honourable Secretary has said that eight bills were sent out by Government for adoption in the Colonies; but the Colonial Secretary of that day knew that in that shape the object of Government never would be attained.* The bills were dissected into the form of eight propositions.

I have overlooked a most important passage in Mr. Stanley's speech, relating to these bills or propositions. I will now read it to the meeting, as it assists to exhibit the stress which he lays on the obstinacy of the Assemblies.

"Eight bills were sent to the Colonies to be there legislatively and executively carried into effect, as so many means to the great end which the Mother Country had so much at heart,—the final termination of the entire system of Colonial Slavery. What was the result? not a single colony condescended to adopt a single bill of the

* It is contrary to the Constitution of Jamaica for the Legislature to entertain, or even receive, ready-made bills from the Executive.

entire eight; and the Colonial Legislatures raised their voices in lofty indignation at our interference in what they declared to be their exclusive business and concern. This took place in 1826: he was then addressing Parliament in 1833, and up to that hour neither the voice of friendly expostulation, nor of authority, had produced the least alteration in the contumacious conduct of the Colonial Legislature. Not a single step had been taken by any of them with a view to the extinction of Negro Slavery."

It is not beside my purpose to set before the meeting the impressions and views under which Lord Bathurst addressed the Duke of Manchester, when he forwarded to his Grace the substance of the eight bills. His Lordship's dispatch enforces a very different course of proceeding to that which would at this day emanate from his successor; and it most emphatically contradicts his successor's assertion, that the resolutions of 1823 were "backed by the imperative command of an Order in Council."—His Lordship writes,

"These measures being substantially passed into laws, the new system *will have fully carried into effect the Resolutions of Parliament.*

"I am perfectly aware of the difficulty, if not impossibility, of framing in this country, on so comprehensive a subject, enactments which are to have their operation in Jamaica.

"I am aware also, that upon some of these topics the wishes (not 'imperative commands') of

His Majesty's Government have already, to a certain extent, been anticipated by the existing laws of the island, and that, without a very intimate and practical acquaintance with those laws, it may perhaps be impracticable to frame, with safety, new legislative provisions on the same or similar subjects. I do not propose that the enclosed papers should be passed without a careful revision, nor probably without some *material alterations*.

" It is almost superfluous to remind your Grace of the necessity of proceeding on this occasion with such discretion, and with such regard to the constitutional privileges of the Council and Assembly, as to afford no reasonable cause for any jealousy or complaint on the part of those bodies. Upon this subject your Grace will exercise your judgment, with all the advantages to be derived from your long and intimate acquaintance with the established usages of the Colonial Legislature."

These extracts assure us that the administration of Lord Liverpool did not doubt that the " executory principle" existed in Jamaica. Force had not entered the imagination of the statesmen of that day; *they* had the modesty to suspect that laws compounded in the Colonial Office might not be practicable in a distant and strange country; *they* considered that the revision and alteration of such laws might be expedient, and they even treated the jealousies, the established usages, and

the constitution of the Assemblies with so much deference and respect, that the Governors were expressly commanded, in forwarding the wishes of Government, to avoid giving those bodies any reasonable cause for complaint. Lord Bathurst also refers to existing laws of the Island which may have anticipated, to some extent, the measures of Government. He admits that perhaps it may be impracticable to frame, with safety, new legislative provisions on the same subjects. We shall presently see what connexion this admission of his Lordship has with the protectorate of Slaves.

Praying the meeting to keep in mind the bold, and confident, and repeated declaration of Mr. Secretary Stanley, that the Assemblies had rejected and contemned every proposition of the Government, except a reluctant and imperfect limitation of the Sunday market, I will now proceed to unfold to the meeting what the Colony of Jamaica has done, and what it has left undone. My residence up to a late day in that island enables me to make an accurate statement of the progress that has been made there. I have always understood that we have not accomplished more in improving the condition of the Slaves than other Colonies; perhaps we have done less: but I confine myself to Jamaica, leaving it to Gentlemen belonging to other Colonies to vindicate their character. I hope, before I sit down, to put Gentlemen, who have never been in the Colonies, in

possession of facts which shall empower them, in their families, in the circle of their acquaintance, and, to all the world if they please, to justify the conduct of the Jamaica Legislature, and to erase the foul stain which has been so mischievously—I had almost said, wickedly—cast upon it by Mr. Secretary Stanley.

The first proposition named by Mr. Stanley is the "abolition of Sunday markets."

Clause 1st of the proposed Bill provides that "no goods shall be exposed for sale on Sunday after the hour of ."

Clause 3rd. "It shall be lawful for His Majesty to instruct the Governor of Jamaica to issue in His Majesty's name a proclamation for the suppression of all markets."

By the 6th clause of the Consolidated Slave Law, passed in 1826, Sunday markets and shops are closed at 11 A. M. All work is prohibited on Sundays, even in crop time.

The proclamation for the suppression of all markets on Sundays has not yet appeared; therefore the desires of Government under this head have been fully complied with.

The 2nd proposition on Mr. Stanley's list is—"The admission of Slave Evidence."

On consulting the heads of the Bill, which were sent to the Governor of Jamaica, I find that by

Clause 1st, it is provided that Clergy of the Established Church, of the Kirk of Scotland, and Roman Catholic priests, carrying on no business

except that of Schoolmaster, may deliver certificates to the protectors of Slaves, setting forth the names and places of abode of Slaves, who in their judgment may be sufficiently instructed in religion to understand the nature of an oath. These Slaves shall be registered.

Clause 2nd. No Minister, not of the Churches of England or of Scotland, shall grant such certificate, unless the principal Secretary of State for the Colonies, or the Governor, shall grant to such Minister a written license to grant such certificate.

Clause 3rd. Slaves so certified and registered shall be admitted to give evidence.

Clause 4th. The protector must grant such certificate, to be produced by the Slave in offering his evidence.

Clause 6th. No Slave shall give evidence in any case where any white person may be charged with, or prosecuted for, any offence punishable with death.

In that which is now the law of Jamaica, all this cumbrous machinery of certificate and registration is dispensed with. A greater latitude is given to the evidence of Slaves than Lord Bathurst required. Not only his evidence is admissible where white persons are charged with offences punishable with death, but also against his master in all criminal cases whatever. The only restriction is, that, to convict free persons, two Slaves must depose to the same fact.

Mr. Stanley has indulged in some violent re-

marks on this law of Slave Evidence: he is filled with the inspiration of some patron of Mr. Pringle, the Anti-Slavery Secretary; and his indignation has been especially directed against a clause which ordains the evidence of a single Slave* to be good against associates in crime who are free. It is difficult to guess what objection there can be against the testimony of a Slave in such cases. Mr. Stanley affords no clue to judge of the foundation of his anger. Many reasons, however, can be given why the general safety requires that an ill-disposed free person should not be permitted to choose an accomplice, who is incapacitated by law to betray him. Mr. Stanley, with his usual concealment when it suits his intemperance, (I must always be understood to speak of Mr. Stanley as the organ of others, for it is too evident that he is lamentably deficient in Colonial knowledge,) with his usual concealment of half the truth, has kept his hearers uninformed of the fact, that the evidence of a Slave cannot affect the *life* of his associate in crime. Had the Jamaica Law of Evidence been intended as a blind and a delusion, and had not their masters been conscious of right, and that their most secret deeds would bear examination, they never would have assented to enactments which removed them from the safe seclusion in which they had hitherto lived among their people;

* In other cases the evidence of two slaves, or of one slave, corroborated by a free person, is necessary to convict free persons.

which placed them, if they were criminal, in the power of their domestics; and which rendered hazardous the abuse of their authority over a single Slave, to engage him in any evil or illegal object or enterprise.

Did we not know the cunning and malice of our enemies, we might have anticipated either some hollow praise of the unexceptionable tendency of this enactment, or that, at least, it would have been passed over in sullen silence: but a deep impression was to be made,—one last and fatal blow was to be struck,—and Mr. Stanley was tutored to blacken us where we thought ourselves best protected, in the hope that our ruin would be completed before we could enter on our defence. Mr. Stanley's instructors were not uninformed that we relied much on the good faith in which we had recognised Slave Evidence: it might possibly have gained us some credit abroad,—we were therefore assailed by the Right Honourable Secretary with all his venom, and with more than his ordinary display of ignorance and credulity, and self-contradiction. Hearken to him again:—

"The next point he would call their attention to was that of Slave Evidence; in reference to which, the proceedings of the Colonial Legislatures were characterised by the same spirit of scorn and mockery that he had been pointing out in relation to the Recommendations and Order in Council of 1823 and 1824. The Order in Council prescribed that the evidence of Slaves should

in all cases be admissible in courts of justice; care being taken, as in the case of infants and persons of imperfect intellect and education, that the Negro (a full-grown infant to all practical intents) should be thoroughly examined, and proved to understand the obligation of an oath and the effects of his evidence; the onus of disproving his competency being thrown on the party against whom he sought redress. How was this just and wholesome rule followed by the Colonial Legislatures? In but two of them was Slave Evidence admissible at all, and in none against his master or against a white. Even against a fellow-slave, a certificate of a magistrate or a clergyman, according to circumstances, was necessary to his being permitted to give evidence. He had stated that a Slave could not give evidence under any circumstances against his master, nor in any capital case against a white man. Now, in the name of common justice and our common nature, how could it be justified, that evidence might be given which would bring a Negro to the scaffold, and yet refused against a white man even in a civil case? Either the evidence in the former case was valid, or it was not. If it was, why should the white master be beyond its reach? if it was not, why should the fellow-slave be its victim? He had stated that, as a general proposition, no Slave Evidence could tell against a white man. There was an exception, which, however, but strengthened the rule. A Negro's evidence would be received against

a white in any case in which a white might be alleged to co-operate as an accomplice with a black in any resistance of a master's oppression; but in no other case, save one, involving an attack upon another white, was a Slave's evidence admissible."

The first blunder, to speak gently, of this Minister of State, is, that Slave Evidence is inadmissible without the certificate of a magistrate or clergyman.

The second is, that it is inadmissible against a white in capital cases.

The third, that it is inadmissible against his master under any circumstances.

The fourth blunder is, that Slave Evidence is confined to "offences in which a white might be alleged to co-operate as an accomplice with a black."

The fifth blunder is, that the evidence of a Slave accomplice is only valid against a free man when the offence has been committed by the free man, in aiding the Slave accomplice to resist the master's oppression.

The sixth and last blunder is, that the competency of a Slave to bear witness, when one white man has attacked or assaulted another, is an exception to, instead of an inherent portion of, the general law.

Truly this young statesman has no cause to be grateful to the persons whose puppet he has condescended to be, for the disgraceful misuse they

have made of his talents and of his high office.

The third proposition relates to the sanctioning of marriage.—This rite has long been encouraged amongst Slaves; and it is usual for owners to give a general authority to clergymen of the establishment to marry their Slaves even to other Slaves belonging to distant owners, provided the consent of such owners has been obtained. The license of the Protector or Magistrate, which was required by Lord Bathurst, is dispensed with in the Jamaica law. Dissenting Ministers sometimes marry, and I have never heard that owners disapproved of such marriages, though the law may not recognise them.

The fourth proposition noticed by Mr. Stanley is, the abolition of taxes on manumission, and compulsory manumission. All taxes on manumission are abolished, and every facility is given to voluntary manumission. To compulsory manumission there are weighty objections, both of a particular and general character. There are no considerable properties that would not be much injured, and many would be entirely ruined by the abstraction of even a very few principal Negroes. The most valuable Slaves, the most liberally rewarded for their services, would be the first to claim the right of purchasing their freedom. Thus would the owner severely suffer for his own generosity: nor would the Negroes themselves be benefited in the end: the owner, in self-de-

fence, would be compelled to reduce his Negroes' means of acquiring money. Instead of rejoicing as heretofore in the prosperity of his Slaves, he would view any improvement in their circumstances with jealousy and alarm. It is to be remembered, that it is by the privileges which the good and industrious Slave enjoys, by the permission of his master, on his master's land, that he is able to accumulate property. This reasoning refers to individual interests. Viewing compulsory manumission as it concerns the public, there is this strong objection. Emancipated Slaves invariably abandon agriculture, (Mr. Stanley errs in supposing that no agricultural Slaves are manumitted) and betake themselves to the towns, where they frequently become idle and disorderly, and burdensome on their relations who remain in slavery. The sudden freedom of many Slaves would not only deprive agriculture of hands it can ill spare, but would, by increasing the number of the idle and disorderly, endanger the peace and safety of the community. A free man, with us, is free to wander unquestioned wherever he pleases; we have no vagrant laws to restrain his right of locomotion.

What man, who has been in the Colonies, can forbear a smile, when he hears rant such as this, applied to the Negro? Mr. Secretary Stanley calls compulsory manumission,

"A principle which alone protects the Negro against the effects of despair, by gilding the horizon even of his blackest fortunes with the bright

hues of hope, and the expectation of days of freedom, ease, and independence."

If time allowed, I might moot the question, whether despair is known in the dwelling of the Negro. The Militia ballot, the tax-gatherer, the heartless bailiff, and the brutal press-gang, are strangers to him. He is equally unaccustomed to repine over a sick wife without medicine and medical attendance, and famishing children; to see his hearth cold, and his hut roofless, and his aged parents dragging out a miserable existence in the parish poor-house. He has a master; and that master supplies all his wants; repairs all his misfortunes; protects him from his own improvidence, and from every injury and enemy, and, I may add, he protects him too often even from the laws he has transgressed. There is not a peasant in the world that walks abroad with a more contented countenance and a more confident bearing than the Colonial Slave. The Right Honourable Secretary must look elsewhere for images of despair, and "must gild with the bright hues of hope the horizon of the blackest fortunes" of some wretches nearer to England. The Negro is above his compassion.

The fifth proposition is the prevention of the separation of families.

The separation of families is strictly prohibited, with the exception, that the law must not be construed to sanction excessive levies. The exception is on the side of humanity. A whole family

must not be torn from their homes for a trifling public or private debt. It is greatly to be lamented that the rights of creditors have been deemed too sacred, to injure them by putting an end to the public sale of Slaves. Jamaica has performed on this head whatever the government has demanded, and many Colonists have been eager to go beyond the wishes of government by attaching the Slaves to the soil, as was advised by Lord Grenville.

The sixth proposition is the regulation of punishments.

The third clause of the proposed bill declares it shall be unlawful to inflict on any one day upon any male slave any number of lashes exceeding .

In the Jamaica Act there are numerous provisions limiting and regulating the punishment of Slaves: these provisions are of a much more humane character than those recommended by Government.

It must be confessed that the requisition of the Colonial Minister to discontinue the flogging of women has not been obeyed. Of this omission Mr. Stanley makes a triumphant use. He exhausts his memory and his imagination in search of terms to illustrate his abhorrence of the people who suffer stripes to be inflicted on the persons of women. He declaims against the practice as "the test of barbarism, of fierce brutal savagery." This part of Mr. Stan-

ley's speech was received with loud applause. The House responded to the denunciations and opinions of the Secretary by repeated cheers. I own that for a moment I felt ashamed that I was a Colonist. I was restored to my self-esteem by recalling to my recollection that these Gentlemen of the House of Commons probably thought only of the delicate and accomplished wives and daughters of the higher ranks, of the retiring modesty of the middle orders, and the virtuous and chaste females of the lower: for I remembered that within a very few years whipping was the common punishment of women confined for their offences in the houses of correction and prisons of England. I, for my part, have not the slightest doubt that these female offenders owe their late and tardy exemption from the cat-o'-nine tails to the outcry that was raised in this country against the whipping of black women in the colonies. The Negro Philanthropists forgot for a long time, in their abhorrence of whipping Negro women in Jamaica, that white women were hourly flogged in Great Britain. They have been compelled, from very shame, to correct the anomaly; and the females of England have to thank their sisters of the West Indies that they have exchanged the scourge for the tread-mill. I do not (God forbid that I should!) vindicate the corporal punishment of women; but of this I am convinced, that the women of Jamaica, and I do not mean to deny them a sense of shame, would rather suffer the really light switching which is now the usual punishment of their faults,

than have it replaced by the field-stocks, by the tread-mill, by solitary confinement, or any other ingenious mode of protracted torment, which the lovers of the Negro race have discovered.

The Right Honourable Secretary believes that a manager or owner of Slaves may inflict the maximum of the legal punishment of thirty-nine lashes on a Negro, merely for looking at him in the face: the Jamaica law certainly permits that degree of punishment, but not at the mere pleasure or caprice of his master. An offence must be committed before any amount of punishment can be inflicted; and if the Negro feels that he has been unjustly punished, or punished severely for a slight offence, he is not long in laying his complaint before a magistrate. He is not deterred by the fear of punishment, should the magistrate consider his complaint frivolous. Mr. Stanley censures the Jamaica law for resenting the false charge of the Slave against the Master. Does the law of England leave unnoticed an unjust accusation? I apprehend not; and before the law in this respect is reformed in Jamaica let it be reformed in England. There is therefore nothing for the Negro to apprehend in going to a magistrate with his complaint. Not only is the ear of the magistrate open to him, but the meaning of the law is frequently strained to afford him protection and redress. However much it may be questioned in this prejudiced, and, so far as the merits of the colonies are concerned, incredulous [illegible]. it is a common cry amongst persons havi[illegible]re-

ment of Negroes, that they have not justice, when their conduct to Slaves becomes a subject of inquiry. If they cannot give a sufficient reason for punishing the Slave, or if they have punished him beyond what his offence demanded, the overseer or master is sure to suffer, even though he has kept far within the limit of the law as to the number of lashes. Under this head, I will offer to the meeting a few remarks on the officer, called the Protector of Slaves, who is created by one of Lord Bathurst's eight propositions, and is a prominent figure in the other seven. Mr. Secretary Stanley tells the House of Commons that without this officer the enactments of the Colonial Legislatures are altogether nugatory. "The local magistrates," says he, "are themselves slave proprietors, and interested in punishing slave delinquency and slave contumacy." The remainder of the passage is too disgustingly calumnious to be repeated to the meeting. I am ready to declare it under the sacred obligation of an oath, as I now assert it on my honour, that there is a strong feeling among the authorities of Jamaica in favour of the Slave. I assert, when he comes in contact with the magistracy, that he has more than justice. I myself have sat on trials in the Supreme Court where slaves have claimed their freedom by a writ of *homine replegiando;* and I have known and heard of many other similar trials; and the result of all these trials has convinced me, and it is well known, that the juries are eager to seize on any pretext for finding a verdict that will manu-

mize the Slaves: and wherefore should we wonder that these feelings are prevalent in Jamaica? They are Englishmen; their literature is English; every ship takes to them the lamentations and the curses of the real and mock friends of the Slave. Every newspaper, every magazine, and review paints, in the darkest colours, the wretchedness and the crime of Slavery. Our brethren in Jamaica sympathize with their friends in England; and though each will defend his own and the general property in Slaves with his life, yet he is willing in particular cases, if he does not grossly violate justice, to yield to impressions in favour of the Slave, which he hardly dares acknowledge to himself. The sight also of the Slaves in court, pleading, as it were, to the jury for that blessing of liberty which themselves prize so highly, must powerfully tend to the success of their suit. No; the people of Jamaica are not the tyrants and savages of Mr. Stanley. Let him inquire, and he will find the Slave code as mercifully interpreted in the hands of the gentlemen of Jamaica, as are the game laws enforced by the gentlemen of England. The inhabitants of Jamaica will not submit to the introduction amongst them of strange judges, under the denomination of Protectors of Slaves. Neither will the magistrates act in subordination to these stipendiaries. Lord Bathurst in the dispatch I have read, addressed to the Duke of Manchester, acknowledged "the impracticability of framing new legislative provisions, on subjects whi[illegible] already been anticipated [illegible]xistin[illegible]

the island." Here is a subject on which his Lordship's proposition had been anticipated: in the magistracy of the colony the Negroes have always found protectors, and they desire no other. We must not however be surprised that Mr. Stanley has no reliance either on our laws or our magistrates, when he can give credence to such a tale as this.

"Suppose," asks the Right Honourable Secretary, "that the Slave had established by evidence a case of cruelty against his master; what was his redress now in Jamaica? why, he is sold to some other tender proprietor, and the proceeds are handed over to the cruel master against whom he had, at such risk, obtained a verdict."

I pass over the Right Honourable Gentleman's sneers, and his wholesale charge of cruelty against proprietors. They are in excellent keeping with the character and duties commonly attached to a Minister of the Crown. The law, of which the Right Honourable Gentleman has made himself so perfect a master, takes from the cruel owner his ill-used slave, and not only manumizes the slave, but inflicts on the owner a penalty of one hundred pounds currency, or sixty-five pounds sterling, which is paid over to the parish authorities, and entitles the manumitted Negro to ten pounds currency a year during his life. The Right Honourable Secretary has assumed his office, admirably accomplished to legislate for the West Indies.

Before I close the topic of punishment and Protector, a topic on which Mr. Stanley

dwells with much exultation, I will observe that the Negro complainant may always escape even the chance of chastisement for leaving his work, to prefer a false charge, by selecting his own day to go to a magistrate: if the magistrate finds the complaint to be groundless, he will give the Slave some good advice and dismiss him.

The seventh proposition recommended the establishment of Savings' Banks.

Most easy it would have been for the Legislature of Jamaica to have conceded this point to the Government. They could have had no repugnance to receiving the money of the Slaves in the Island treasury; but they knew that no Negro money would be brought to the bank, and they disdained to minister to the cant and humbug of the day, by passing a law which they were conscious must have remained a dead letter on their statute book. But, as if nothing should be wanting to refute and expose the calumnies of the Colonial Office, I am able to mention to the meeting that a gentleman holding the office of a receiver of taxes took it into his head that a bank for Negroes' savings might be established. He procured the assent and support of the parish authorities, (our parishes have something of the jurisdiction and extent of English counties,) and he advertised in the newspapers, and took every necessary step to publish his plan, and his hopes of success. I need hardly say his failure was complete. At the end of six months his bank book was without a scratch, and not a

single five-penny piece had been offered to him. Yet this is one of the crimes alleged against the Colonies, that they have not established Savings' Banks. Every man, who knows the Negro character, knows that his propensity is to hoard and conceal his money. He has no notion of the producing quality of money, nor how it can be made to afford, when properly employed, a regular periodical payment, without diminishing the capital. Time, to be sure, may work wonders; but as yet the mind of the Negro is wholly unenlightened on the subject of political economy.

I have now examined all the propositions of 1826, except that which was designed to secure the property of Slaves. Mr. Stanley describes the proceedings of the Local Legislatures to obtain this object, as "altogether nugatory and inefficient." I admit that in Jamaica a Negro cannot hold land, nor can he be a suitor or defendant in courts of law. These privileges are incompatible with his condition. Land can be of no value to him, who depends on the will of another for time to cultivate it; and his attendance on Courts of Law, as plaintiff, defendant, or witness, would deprive the owner of his Slave's services. Besides, were the Slave cast in an action of debt, his property could not be made liable, nor could his person be taken. His property for the most part is derived from his owner, and, were it levied on, the owner must replace it, or the Negro will become sickly for want of clothing and bedding,

and from depression of spirits. His family too must be supported by the master. Still less can the Negro Slave be thrown in prison. His imprudence must not fall on the master. I apprehend that the Negro would rather hold his *peculium* under the protection of his master than be made subject to the tender mercies of those humane persons, who would incarcerate him for debt, with all the kindness and best intentions in the world. But the Jamaica law has not been silent. The Slave can hold personal property as well against his own master as others. If he is wronged in his property, he can lay his case before three justices of the peace; and he can summon witnesses, under penalty for non-attendance. The jurisdiction of this petty court extends to twenty-five pounds. Should the deprivation of property exceed twenty-five pounds, he can, in the name of his owner, institute suits at law or equity.

I have now gone over all the propositions of 1826,—on the utter neglect and contempt of which by the Colonial Assemblies, Mr. Secretary Stanley rests his demand for the interposition of the Imperial Parliament. With the single exception of the Savings' Bank, every proposition of Lord Bathurst has been, in whole or in part, acceded to. In 1826, the very year—indeed, the very month —that followed the laying of these propositions before the Assembly of Jamaica, was a bill introduced and passed by the House for the amendment of the Slave law. We will place the opinion

of the Duke of Manchester and of Lord Bathurst on this law beside the opinion of the present Colonial Secretary. In a letter dated in December 1826, his Grace writes to Lord Bathurst:—

"The admission of Slave evidence, the alteration in the mode of trial of Slaves, and the limitation of punishment by individuals, *are very material points*. And in the new bill there is throughout *a spirit of mildness and moderation* which certainly improves the condition of the slave in many important particulars."

His Grace, on the prorogation of the Assembly, says:—

"I trust that the laborious attention you have bestowed on the revision of the Slave laws, the mildness and moderation which the new act betrays throughout, the beneficial alteration it produces in the condition of the Slave in many particulars, more especially those which regard the mode of trial and the admission of their evidence in courts of justice, will be highly satisfactory to His Majesty's Government."

Lord Bathurst, in his dispatch dated February 22nd, 1827, writes:—

"I should be unwilling to withhold the expression of satisfaction which His Majesty's Govern-

ment cannot but feel at the disposition which the Legislature of Jamaica have shown on this occasion to attend to their suggestions, more particularly by introducing into the bill two measures of so much importance, as those of admitting the evidence of Slaves, and of making an essential alteration in their mode of trial." Lord Bathurst was about to leave office.

Mr. Huskisson, in reporting the disallowance of the bill, acknowledges "with much satisfaction the advances made to meet the recommendations conveyed in Lord Bathurst's dispatch." He terms the alterations "valuable improvements." He says, "The many wise and beneficent provisions which the act contains have been fully appreciated."

In 1827 the Legislature, astonished, and perhaps displeased at the rejection of their labours of the year before, declined to send a bill to the Governor which he could not assent to, they not being prepared to leave out the sectarian clauses.

In 1828, the bill of 1826 was passed again by the House, and rejected by the Lieut.-Governor, Sir John Keane.

In 1829 Lord Belmore writes to Sir George Murray, on a bill being passed by the three branches of the Legislature: "The bill, on the whole, is certainly more favourable than that of 1826. I could not feel myself justified in refusing my assent to it."

This bill was again disallowed because it contained the old provisions respecting religious worship, and contributions and offerings made by Slaves.

Sir George Murray says of the bill, 8th April, 1830:—"I can only express in general the deep regret which is felt by His Majesty's Government that the unfortunate introduction of the clauses to which I have referred should continue to deprive the Slave population of the many advantages which the wisdom and humanity of the Colonial Legislature have proposed to confer on them; benefits, the value of which I do not the less readily acknowledge, though the act, in many important respects, falls short of the measures which His Majesty has introduced into the Colonies, which are subject to his legislative authority in council.

"Your Lordship will convey to the Council and Assembly of Jamaica the reiterated assurance of the most anxious desire on the part of His Majesty to co-operate with them in effecting those improvements in the Slave code which they have so repeatedly sanctioned by their recent enactments; and you will not fail to employ the most legitimate influence connected with your office, and that belonging to your personal character, to allay the dissatisfaction which I fear may be created by the decision, which it has been my duty to announce. * * * * * * The repetition of similar

enactments (relating to religious worship) can answer no useful purpose, although it may inevitably postpone the adoption of other measures of general improvement, in favour of which the Colonial Legislatures have shown so much laudable zeal."

This is in the tone of sorrow, not of anger; not a threat of destroying the Constitution, not a word of immediate Emancipation, so late as April the 8th, 1830.

In February 1831 an act for the government of Slaves was at length passed, which excluded the objectionable clauses; and Lord Goderich, the fourth Secretary of the Colonies who had engaged in this contest, thus writes to the Governor, Lord Belmore: his letter is dated June 16th, 1831:—

"His Majesty has received with the highest satisfaction the proof which this Act (of February) contains of the disposition of the Council and Assembly of Jamaica to recede from those grounds which they adopted in the act passed in December 1826. The Local Legislature have well consulted what is due to their own dignity, as well as to the interests of the large population placed under their immediate superintendence; and the Council and Assembly may be confidently assured, that no office can be more grateful to His Majesty's feelings, than that of co-operating with them in

measures cheerfully undertaken by themselves for the mitigation and gradual extinction of Slavery."

No dissatisfaction is herein expressed of the Legislature, but rather confidence and approbation. The gradual extinction of Slavery is desired by Government, and this desire is communicated to the Assembly in November 1831.

In July 1833 they are to be told their Slaves are free. Is this *gradual* emancipation?

To go on with Lord Goderich's letter, which proves that up to that date the Assembly had not stood still—

"His Majesty's Government have perceived with satisfaction that baptism is no longer made an essential qualification of a Slave witness, and that a single man may be admitted to give evidence, if his testimony is supported, to the same fact or circumstance, not as heretofore by a fellow Slave only, but by a free person, the Slave being examined apart: on the other hand, I cannot but regret that this corroboration should be required in order to hold to bail or commit for trial a person charged with a crime by a single Slave. There are many cases in which justice may be defeated by such a rule. Rape may be mentioned as an illustration of this remark."

The Jamaica Legislature thought that some re-

gard was due to accused persons. Confinement in gaol on the unsupported evidence of a Negro till the Court met would have been an error on the side of severity. It seems a necessary precaution, till the credibility and fitness of Slaves to give evidence is ascertained, to limit their competency. This law is an amendment of the law of 1826; that of 1826 was less rigid than Lord Bathurst's proposition. No complaint is made by Lord Goderich, of the nature of Mr. Stanley's charges, against this clause.

But while the Jamaica Assembly was congratulating themselves that they had accomplished all that was required of them, and were rejoicing in the hope of resting from their wearisome labours on the Slave bill, a sudden change of policy had taken place at home, and they were destined to find all their sacrifices and submissions unavailing.

On the 10th December 1831, Lord Goderich transmits a circular dispatch to the Colonies, accompanied by the famous Order in Council of November 2nd, of the same year.

After complaints of the opposition of the Colonies to the Government measures, (which cannot be applied to Jamaica, although Jamaica was favoured with the contents of the dispatch,) his Lordship says :—

"A measure of fiscal regulation, so devised as to be productive of real and substantial advantage, has appeared to be the only additional method

within the power of His Majesty's Government to propose, which in some degree would meet the exigencies of the West-Indian commercial interests; but to offer such an advantage to the Planters, without at the same time taking any security for their acceptance of the measures in behalf of the Slaves, would be, if not directly inconsistent with the Parliamentary Resolutions of 1823, at least an abandonment, and even reversal of, the policy of the Executive Government resulting from those resolutions.

"I have therefore to announce to you the fixed determination of His Majesty's Government to propose to Parliament, in the present session, a measure of substantial relief to the West-Indian Interest; and that this measure will be so framed as to take effect upon the produce of the Crown Colonies as a matter of course, and upon that of those only of the other Colonies in which the provisions of His Majesty's Order in Council of the 2nd ultimo shall have acquired in perpetuity the force of law."

This Order in Council fell like a thunderbolt on the people of Jamaica. Their Slave law, which had been approved by Government, had been in operation for little more than a month. The design of the Mother Country became manifest. They saw that it was resolved to emancipate their Slaves without compensation. The Order was rejected with indignation: and fortunate it is for the Colonists that they were not deluded by the fair

promises and the temptation held out by Government. Had they enacted the Order in Council, their Slaves would have been an incumbrance, not a valuable property; an incumbrance only to be lightened or removed by the "fiscal regulations" which Lord Goderich held out to them as the price of obedience. These fiscal regulations, which were to have revived the prosperity of the Planter, and to have rewarded his compliance, have no existence except in the dispatch of Lord Goderich. Our produce is still loaded with taxation; injurious restrictions still hang upon our commerce; our sugars are excluded from uses, which, if they were permitted, would absorb the surplus production. But it may be said, Ye were contumacious, and merited not the boon; ye discarded the Order in Council, and deserve chastisement and not reward. Read Lord Goderich's circular, and you will find it there written—"I announce to you the fixed determination of His Majesty's Government to propose to Parliament, in the present session, a measure of substantial relief to the West-India Interest."

Will it be believed that a year and a half have elapsed, and this measure of relief has not even been spoken of, either in or out of Parliament? It has gone to sleep, and is forgotten by all but the oppressed and cheated West Indian. Let us however allow, for a moment, that the Legislative Colonies have no claim to this indulgence. What have the Crown Colonies done, that they should

be mocked with this shadow of "substantial relief?" In those Colonies the Crown is absolute; they have no chartered rights, no dearly loved privileges, that they estimate far beyond pecuniary benefits. They have no constitution to barter for gold. Here, at least, ministers possessed the power of commanding the operation of the Order in Council. They could have no misgiving that their authority would be disputed. Their path was chalked out by themselves. The Order in Council was to go hand in hand with "substantial relief;" or, to use the words of Lord Goderich, "this measure (of relief) will be so framed as to take effect upon the produce of the Crown Colonies as a matter of course."

There are gentlemen from the Crown Colonies in this room. Let me ask them, what are the fiscal regulations which have indemnified them "as a matter of course" for the vexatious interference in their property, which is the heart and soul of this famous Order? They have received no indemnity. And why? Because the Order in Council was found by the governors, the subordinate officers, and the people, impracticable in those Colonies; because the whole influence and power, and preparation of government, were insufficient to break down the barriers of common sense, which alone protected these Colonies from the mad, the stupid, and ridiculous mandate of the Colonial Office. If the authority of the Crown has been defeated in St. Lucia and in Trinidad, and the Order itself has

been disgracefully abandoned, are the Legislative Colonies to be deprived of their estates and their charters, because they were not less sensible of the blunders of the Home Government, than the officers of the government and the people of the Crown Colonies? When the ministry can point to the unchartered Colonies and exclaim, "Behold how pleasantly and beneficially our system is working!" then, and not till then, may they censure the chartered Colonies for not profiting by the example.

I may perhaps be pardoned, if I add to the reasons which check the melioration of Slavery in the Colonies, and which I have already stated under the several heads, the one great and absorbing difficulty—to further progress,—a difficulty which this country only can remove.

In the reiterated demands of Government on the Colonies, since the year of the Resolutions, there has always been omitted the repetition of the last few words, which pledge the House of Commons "to a fair and equitable consideration of the interests of private property." The Colonies are enjoined to pursue a course which tends to deteriorate, and rapidly to extinguish, their pecuniary interests; yet an ominous silence has been kept respecting their claims to compensation. What wonder, such being the fact, that the Assemblies place no reliance on the good faith of the Mother Country, and that they are slow to divest themselves of their possessions, which they

have no hope will be restored to them in any other shape?

There are very few topics that I have left unnoticed. In referring to them, I will not detain the meeting much longer.

Mr. Stanley has availed himself of the evidence of Mr. Wildman and Mr. Lovell. I would hint to him that the testimony of the Duke of Manchester, of Sir John Keane, of Admiral Halstead, and Mr. Hinchliffe,—all men of high rank and character, and who have no pecuniary interest whatever in the colonies,—is equally valuable with that of Mr. Wildman and Mr. Lovell. The evidence of the Noble Duke, and of the other eminent persons I have mentioned, is founded on a long and intimate acquaintance with Jamaica and the Negro character; and it does not support that portion of the evidence of Mr. Wildman and Mr. Lovell which it has pleased the Right Honourable Secretary to select as illustrative of his argument. I would recommend Mr. Secretary Stanley to read the entire evidence, taken before the committees of the Houses of Lords and Commons; and I am much mistaken, if he does not feel ashamed of the indolence, or of the hurry, which has in this, as in other respects, thrown him upon some base underling of office for the facts and matter of his speech.

The Right Honourable Secretary, to complete his picture of poor Jamaica, informed his audience

that the *physical* obstacles in the way of marriage of Negroes had been removed, but that the Negro entered the marriage state without being previously made aware of the moral and religious obligations of the state of wedlock.

Let us see what the Bishop of Jamaica writes to Lord Goderich, August 29th, 1831 :—

"Fifteen chapels built; four building.

"They are generally well attended by the Slave population.

"Schools have been established for the free admission of Slaves in some of the towns, and Sunday schools are attached to most of the places of Sunday worship. From the corporation of Kingston, and vestry of Spanish Town, I have received the most cordial and liberal support.

"The difficulties of establishing schools in the interior part of the island begin to be less formidable.

"The reports of my Clergy concur in bearing testimony to the intense and earnest desire on the part of the Slaves for religious instruction.

"Marriage is every day becoming more frequent among them; and a faithful discharge of the duties and obligations is in proportion to their advancement in religious knowledge: a marked influence in their conduct and character is clearly observable.

"Catechetical instruction of the Slaves forms a

part of the service at all places of public service, and is expressly provided for by the Clergy Act of the island."

Unhappily, the Right Reverend Prelate confines himself to the labours of the Established Church. It was rather to be wished than expected, that he would have spoken of the progress of other religious denominations, in extending Christianity amongst the Slaves. In my own immediate neighbourhood, there are two ministers of the Kirk of Scotland, who are as successful as they deserve to be in enlightening the Slaves. In other districts there are several more. In every considerable town there are Jewish synagogues; in Kingston, two Roman Catholic chapels; and in every part of the island, till the late insurrection, there were Wesleyan, Baptist, and Moravian ministers, and places of worship. It is untrue that these sectarians were discouraged by the free people or proprietors before the rebellion. The reverse is the fact. At the present day, the Negroes have as much knowledge of religion, as persons of their class in other countries. It is a gross mistake to imagine that they are ignorant and untaught.

I now come to a most important part of Mr. Stanley's statement; namely, that in which he has spoken of the cultivation of sugar, and the loss of life by which it is attended. That the Right Honourable Secretary is partially correct cannot

be denied: on many sugar estates there is a decrease of the Slave population. The decrease is not so considerable as is generally supposed, but still there is a decrease; and it is much to be lamented, and, if possible, remedied. For instance in Jamaica, when the rebellion summoned every free man to join the ranks of the militia, not less than five thousand young and able-bodied free persons of colour sprung suddenly into notice, of whose existence no one had been aware. These and their parents and their children were descendants of Africans, had been entirely lost sight of, and were confounded in the estimate of the decrease of the population. There are in Jamaica upwards of 70,000 descendants of Africans, to be deducted from the exaggerated waste of negro life in that island. When a race of Creole Negroes is substituted for the Africans, an increase will be the natural and certain consequence. But, says the Colonial Secretary, "sugar cultivation is so detrimental to life, that any measure which will diminish this production is politic and humane. The scheme I shall have to propose to you will vastly diminish, in its execution, the production of sugar. I therefore rely on you for your consent to emancipation."

Forgetting the conquest of Demerara, of Trinidad, St. Lucia, and the Mauritius, Mr. Stanley continues:—

"The Planter owes his sufferings to over-production of this article; his monopoly of our market

is a delusion; he sends to us a million of hundred-weights more of sugar than we can consume, the price is consequently regulated by the European market." "Emancipate his Slaves," exclaims the Secretary, "and he must diminish his exports, and the advance in price will make amends for the deficiency in quantity." To entice the House to go with him, the Secretary produced documents to prove that where sugar increased, the Negroes died; and Demerara was fixed on, as affording an example of the truth of his inferences. I should have liked to have heard from the lips of the Right Honourable Secretary a more detailed exposition of this branch of his subject. He seemed to me to touch upon it cursorily and tenderly; the destruction of life was evidently a favourite theme, to be fondly cherished and reluctantly parted with. But the enhanced value of produce that was to indemnify the Planter, and to bestow on the Negro the blessings of well-fed idleness, for one fourth of the working days of the week, giving him a Sunday of two days and a half, and only ten hours daily labour the remaining part of the week; this enhanced value of produce was distantly glanced at, and suddenly abandoned. Was it thrown out as a lure to our Colonial interests? Is it to be whispered about, to silence the consciences of men, who may have a prejudice for the rights of property? Has the Right Honourable Secretary any meaning, beyond finding an immediate answer to the cavilling of those who

may not be willing to see that source dried up, from which the empire has derived such prodigious advantages. No, says the Secretary, cane cultivation will still be carried on; one hogshead of sugar will sell in the market for the price of two at the present time; so, the Planter will be encouraged to continue his cultivation. I suspect the Right Honourable Secretary was afraid of alarming the political economists and the free-trade politicians of the House. The former will find his project opposed to their principle, that it is destructive to the best interests of a nation, that the mass of the people should live in a state of artificial plenty and idleness; and the latter will object to paying a shilling a pound for British colonial sugar, when the Brazils and Cuba can manufacture it for less than half the money. Nor will the lower orders of this country like to work fourteen or sixteen hours a day, and have to surrender a share of their earnings, in the shape of a high price for sugar, for no other reason than that his black brother may sun himself and scratch his head for three days of the seven.

I think I can show the Right Honourable Gentleman a mode of reducing sugar cultivation, without either shocking the doctrines of political economy and free trade, or ruining the Planter. Let the Government encourage, by protecting duties, the vesting of capital and labour in the growing of tobacco, indigo, cochineal, cocoa, and cotton. Why are not these valuable articles of

commerce produced in Jamaica, and in the other islands? Because the greediness of this Government for revenue has extirpated them. They once flourished: heavy duties have destroyed them one after the other; and sugar had long followed in their train, had any other kind of produce promised a different result, or had not the capital been so large, and, in its nature, irremovable and inconvertible. Mr. Stanley has discovered that cotton is favourable to Negro life; and the calculations on which his opinion is founded agree with my own observation. Let Government give a decided and unalterable preference in the home market to colonial cotton, and the cane will soon give way to its favoured rival.

Mr. Stanley must not be left in ignorance that if the sugar crops of the Colonies are reduced by a million of cwts. to meet no more than the demand of the home market, that this defalcation in the supply of Europe must be met by an enlarged cultivation in the Brazils or Cuba. Every commercial man will inform the Right Honourable Gentleman that the enlarged cultivation can only be effected by a proportionate importation of African Slaves into those countries. So true it is that a sudden and compulsory change in the internal economy of our Colonies will act as a bounty to the Slave Trade we are so anxious to abolish.

Such are the statements, and such are the arguments, on the truth and strength of which Parliament

is invited to dissolve those Colonial Legislatures which have existed more than two centuries, and under which the Colonies have flourished, enriching themselves and the Mother Country, extending her commerce, reinforcing her navy, and pouring hundreds of millions into her exchequer.

There are matters touched on by Mr. Stanley which I shall not further trespass on the meeting by replying to: what I have omitted to answer, other gentlemen will address themselves to more ably. I might have indulged in recrimination and retort. Last week forty-seven men and boys perished by an explosion in a coal-mine—our Negroes do not labour in mines. Thirty new-born children are said to have been thrown into the Clyde within three years. Child-murder is unknown amongst us. Crimes are common in this pattern country, which we know by name only. Murder and highway robbery, and stealing from the person, are so seldom committed, that they cannot be reckoned amongst the offences of the West Indies. We have removed the disabilities of the Jews and of the free people of colour, without any invitation or encouragement of the Government. It is long since we limited the hours of Slave labour, of able-bodied Slaves, to ten hours the day, while the factory children of this humane and pious kingdom have been toiling fourteen and sixteen hours;—their labour being in unwholesome and confined manufactories, and the Slaves' in the pure and open air. Our black Slave children do

not betray the sickly countenances, the stunted figures, the incipient deformity and squalid appearance, the ragged and dirty persons of the labouring infants in England.

The meeting has already declared its opinion of Mr. Stanley's plan. I shall not mark its obvious defects; but I could wish to be informed where the money is to come from that is to set it to work. Will England pay an army of protectors, of superintendents and police, and the double garrisons she must maintain when she has subverted the present Colonial Militia, and put arms into the hands of the Negroes? Will England be content to defray the military and civil charges which now are contentedly borne in the Islands, but which must cease to be paid from the impossibility of collecting a revenue from a ruined people? Those savings, to effect which so many reductions have been made, even to the depriving multitudes of clerks in the public offices, and of workmen in the dockyards, of their means of support,—those savings, and much more, will be swallowed up in the expenditure upon this new Colonial system. Far better would it be to surrender the Colonies at once to their own guidance, and thus peaceably, and without injustice, throw off the stigma that attaches to Slavery. Let those who possess riches beware. We are despoiled in the intoxication of power, and to establish an abstract principle of humanity. The nation cannot gain by our loss. They do not conceal from themselves that they

may suffer in capital, commerce, and revenue. Will the active and mischievous energies that have wrought our fall slumber over their victory? Will they not rather seek for other conquests? Our loss is not their gain. But the spoils of the Church, and of the Fundholder, can be estimated; a victory over both or either will relieve every man of a large proportion of his contribution to the State. There is no irreconcilable difference between the plunder of the Planter and of the Fundholder. It is the national honour and purity which robs us to-day; it may be the national interest to rob some other defenceless victim to-morrow.

Lord Howick, who followed the Colonial Secretary, and who does not, any more than ourselves, put faith in the soundness of Mr. Stanley's views, has taken a just estimate of the difficulty of meliorating Slavery, or of abolishing it, without the assistance of the Local Legislatures. His Lordship does not expect that they will co-operate in the project of Government. I am confident that the people of Jamaica, from the highest to the lowest, will resist it in every way. Society may be thrown into disorder; the supremacy of the laws may yield to military violence; the Slaves may resume the torch and the knife; and the white inhabitants may be massacred or exiled. But not even to avoid these horrors will they surrender their rights to the arbitrary disposal of the Parliament. I leave it to my learned friend on my left to reply to Mr. Stanley's assumption of a power in the

Imperial Parliament to legislate for the Colonies. If the House of Commons once begins to run this career, it must be prepared either to cast off Jamaica, or to carry its interference into the minutest details; for it will have no assistance from the despised and insulted Assembly. The laws of our reformed Parliament must be executed by the stipendiary magistrates and the soldiery. No jury will act according to their tenor, except a jury of grenadiers. The Governor must be invested with executive and legislative functions, for the House of Commons will not at first be very adroit in the exercise of their assumed prerogative. Taxes, if the people have any money, will be levied by a simple process. The Governor will decree them, and the bayonet will collect them. This will be the fate of English subjects, in an English Colony, who are accused of no crime, but buying Slaves of English merchants, and in obedience to the will of their lawful sovereigns.

To reconcile the House of Commons to the violation of the privileges of the Assemblies, Mr. Stanley produces Mr. Otys, the president of Massachusetts in 1765. Why he has dragged Mr. Otys from his obscurity I cannot devise, unless it is to show his excursive reading. The Colonial Assemblies will not bow to this authority, however weighty the Right Honourable Gentleman may esteem it. They need seek no other refutation of Mr. Otys, than the swords of the three millions of men who replied to the arrogant pretensions of the

British Parliament, and the nonsense of Mr. Otys, by capturing its armies, and expelling its garrisons. Those men were the fathers of the fourteen millions who now occupy our former provinces, the United States.

NOTE I.

Mr. Stanley bursts out into rapture at the name of Wilberforce. I am not acquainted with the sentiments of that Gentleman on the extinction of Slavery in the Colonies; but the time was when he, as well as other Abolitionists of the Slave Trade, denied that they aimed at the emancipation of the Slaves in the Colonies. I shall not seek for Mr. Wilberforce's opinions in the Debates of Parliament, when the most tranquil persons were heated with the cruelties of the Slave Trade; but I refer to a pamphlet he published in October, 1814, long after the animosities of that discussion were forgotten. The pamphlet is entitled "A Letter to Prince Talleyrand Perigord, on the subject of the Slave Trade."

"The hostility of the West Indians (to the abolition) was greatly aggravated by an attempt to confound the abolition of the trade in Slaves, with the emancipation of those already in the Colonies; *though the Abolitionists took all opportunities* of proclaiming *that it was the Slave Trade, and not Slavery*, against which they were directing their efforts.

"I have remarked that the same misapprehension pervades the recent publications of the Chamber of Commerce of Nantes; and I have been assured, that one of the ablest of your public men, whose recent loss you are now deploring, *had also been misled into adopting it.*" Mr. Wilberforce, therefore, is not one of those "who looked forward with a certain conviction in their minds" to the emancipation of the Slaves, as soon as the Slave Trade was disposed of. The presentiment of the West Indians, that a forced emancipation would follow the Slave Trade, is now justified.

Note II.

In the debate which is referred to in the speech on Mr. Francis's motion, respecting the regulation of Slaves in the West Indies, Mr. Fox said:—

"I have been accused of throwing out the threat of independence on the subject of the West-India Islands. In answer to that, I most decidedly affirm, that if it were to become a question whether these Islands should be connected with this country, and in consequence of that connexion all the stigma attending that abominable system of Slavery should be ignominiously continued, or that their complete independence should take place, I should not have one doubt on the subject. I am by no means blind to the danger of such a separation. I desire it not; but if the Colonies are inclined to refuse their assent to so wise and humane a proposition as has now been made for the amelioration of the state of the Slaves, I should not feel myself inclined to employ either armies or navies to reduce them to subjection, but would, in the language of a gentleman who, though not present, I cannot name, as being a member of this House, desire them to 'go, and be happy in their own way, if happiness could be found by acting contrary to every principle of justice, policy, and humanity.'"

Mr. Pitt thus expressed himself in the same debate:—

"The total abolition of the traffic in those unfortunate people (the Negroes), he concluded was the only act to be expected from the British House of Commons, and without this no local legislation would be of any material avail.

"He was clearly against passing any law for taxation in a British Parliament, that would have in its operation a local application to every estate in the West-India Colonies. He cautioned the House against stirring a question of such a delicate nature; it would only excite a spirit of jealousy, and defeat its own object. The House had relinquished the power of making any alteration with respect to the property of the Negroes; it

had given out of its hands the power of taxation in the Colonies: therefore, if the stirring of any question was more dangerous than another, it was that to which he now adverted. If Parliament reserved its undoubted right to regulate every measure that relates to trade, it retained the power of abolishing the Slave Trade. Why then not adopt the measure at once, without involving it in innumerable difficulties, by attempting to interfere with the local legislation of the Colonies? In this view of the question, he felt himself bound to give his negative to the present motion."

Note III.

By the Jamaica Almanack of 1832 there were in that Island—

Six Scotch Presbyterian Clergymen,
Nineteen Wesleyan Methodist Missionaries,
Twelve Baptist Missionaries,
Eight Moravian Missionaries.

In all, forty-five Ministers of religion, besides Clergy of the Establishment, which consists of

One Bishop,
Twenty-one Rectors,
Eighteen Curates,
Eleven Assistant Curates.

By this list it appears that there were, before the Rebellion, ninety-six Protestant Ministers employed in Jamaica; add to them two Roman Catholic Priests, and young men in orders, waiting for cures, and we have upwards of a hundred Ministers in the Colony.

MR. BURGE'S SPEECH,

AT A GENERAL MEETING OF THE WEST-INDIA BODY.

My Lord St. Vincent,

In seconding the motion that the proposed petition to both Houses of Parliament be adopted, I am persuaded I express the unanimous feeling of this meeting, in acknowledging the important service which my Honourable Friend has just rendered us, by his comprehensive and conclusive refutation of the numerous mis-statements and misrepresentations, with which Mr. Secretary Stanley recommended to the House of Commons his measure for the extinction of Slavery. I have, however, the greatest reason to value that service. My friend has much more effectively performed, than I could have done, the task which, in his absence, my duty no less than my inclination, my love of justice no less than my attachment to Jamaica, would have urged me to have undertaken.

But whilst you participate with me in the gratification we have all felt in hearing the triumphant vindication of our fellow colonists against Mr. Stanley's accusations, you will join with me, I am sure, in regretting, that it was not

heard in the assembly where those accusations were made. The statements of the Right Honourable Secretary, sent forth to the public with all the authority, which his name, and character, and official situation could confer on them, would then have been accompanied by their full, direct, and unequivocal contradiction.

The shame and sorrow with which that speech was heard, have not, I am convinced, been confined to the breasts of West Indians. They, indeed, are the only victims of its injustice; but I can readily imagine that even the conscientious advocate of Emancipation, who, deluded by the dangerous impulses of his enthusiasm, believes his cause strong enough to have triumphed by the force of truth and reason, will consider that injustice has been done to that cause, in the attempt to carry it by the violence of passion and prejudice. The time will arrive, perhaps it has already arrived, when Mr. Stanley himself will share in that shame and in that sorrow.

I have no desire to give utterance to a single expression, which does not strictly belong to an examination of Mr. Stanley's speech, or which could betray any feelings of personal irritation or resentment. They can find no place in my mind on such an occasion: I know not how the minds of others may be constituted, but I should say, the man neither sees, nor feels, the full extent of the inevitable and overwhelming desolation which awaits us, if he can find space in

his mind for any such feelings, even towards its authors.

The Meeting will not soon forget the description, as just as it was impressive, which Mr. Stanley gave of the great question he was then bringing before the House. "It was a mighty experiment, it was a question of unparalleled magnitude and importance, it was surrounded with difficulties and dangers so appalling, and almost insurmountable, that there was only a choice between them. It deeply affected the commerce and revenue of Great Britain, and involved all those numerous interests here and in the West Indies, whose very existence depended on the preservation of the Colonies; nay, its decision must produce an immense influence upon millions of foreign subjects." We believed that such a description of this question was of itself the surest pledge, that the Right Honourable Gentleman intended himself to bring, and that he was desirous all should bring, to its consideration the most candid and dispassionate judgment. Who could doubt, after such a description, that he would urge no topic which, by addressing itself to the passions or prejudices of his audience, would be fatal to the exercise of such a judgment; and that whatever topic he did urge, would be based on facts of undeniable truth and accuracy?

This question has made its progress, and has acquired such an ascendancy, as to have raised a

voice, which the Right Honourable Gentleman says no minister can withstand, because it has never yet been made the subject of sober and patient and accurate inquiry, but has always been presented to the public under prejudices the most unfounded, and impressions the most erroneous. As a Minister of the King, it was due to the question itself, it was due to his fellow subjects to have endeavoured to remove those prejudices, and correct those impressions. But it was an especial duty in him, as a member of the present Government, scrupulously to have abstained from increasing or confirming them. He knew that, as the victims of their injustice, we had long and in vain implored the Government to grant a solemn inquiry into the state of Colonial society, and of Colonial laws and usages. We were convinced that the result of such an inquiry would remove them. That they have not been removed by the completion of that inquiry, which we at length obtained, is the act of the present Government alone, at whose instance its farther prosecution was suspended.

Such were the considerations which Mr. Stanley's character, his duty as a Minister of the Crown, his acknowledged sense of the magnitude of the question, and of the prejudices with which it was surrounded,—and above all the part which the Government had taken in preventing us from removing those prejudices, justified us in expecting would have influenced the tone, the conduct, and the

temper with which he would have brought this measure before Parliament. How those expectations have been disappointed, you have heard in that complete and unanswerable statement which my friend has made to you. His refutation has applied itself with so much detail to each of Mr. Stanley's misstatements, that there is scarcely left a single part of it which is not answered. I do not know whether I ought to do more than add to it my express, entire, unqualified corroboration. If I depart from that course, and select a few of his misrepresentations, I do so because I deeply feel the injustice which the Colonists have received at the hands of Mr. Stanley, and because I owe it to them to bear my testimony to that injustice.

The Right Honourable Secretary, in his attack on the Colonists, has dealt in general, as well as in particular, accusations. He has misrepresented the general character and spirit of their legislative proceedings, as well as the particular legislative measures which they have adopted. He has asserted that ever since 1792 the Colonies have acted on the same spirit which Mr. Burke then condemned, and have almost in every instance shown a total disregard of executory principles, in their legislative measures for the amelioration of the condition of the Slave population. I am sorry that the lateness of the hour precludes me from giving you a recapitulation of the various Slave laws passed by the Legislature of Jamaica and the other

Colonies, between that period and 1823. It would have been, without a single comment, the most satisfactory refutation of this accusation. But permit me to call your attention to the Slave law of Jamaica of 1816, and I will confine myself to one only of its provisions. With the view of facilitating the gift of freedom to Slaves, one of its clauses permitted the manumission of the Slave to be devised by any species of testamentary paper which would be sufficient to pass personal property, although the law required a will, attested by three witnesses, in order to render valid the devise of the Slave himself. That you may justly appreciate the general character of the provisions of the Jamaica Slave law of 1816, and above all that you may judge how far Mr. Secretary Stanley is justified in his description of the legislative proceedings of that Colony, I will read to you a passage from the Duke of Manchester's Speech to the Assembly in 1817:—

"The Prince Regent has been pleased to express his entire approbation of the measures which you adopted during the last session, for preventing any evasion of the laws relating to the abolition of the Slave Trade, and for improving the comforts of the Negro population; his Royal Highness not only regarding them as containing provisions highly important in themselves, but as manifesting a system of liberality and justice most creditable to the Colony: and I assure you, it affords me particular gratification to see those proceedings, which I

know to have originated in the best and most considerate motives, so justly appreciated by His Majesty's Government."

Such is the answer which I oppose to Mr. Stanley's accusation against the Colony of Jamaica. In the course of ten years which elapsed after the enactment of that law, several Acts, having for their object the benefit and improvement of the Slaves, or facilitating their manumission, passed the Jamaica Legislature, and received the Royal Assent.

I proceed to Mr. Stanley's next general accusation. "The Colonial Legislatures, notwithstanding the Resolutions of 1823, the admonitions of the Government, and the friendly warnings of the Legislature, have done next to nothing, and the Mother Country has looked to them in vain for any redress. In 1826 eight Bills were sent, all which were deliberately rejected by every Colony. Every warning has been disregarded, every admonition treated with contempt. The whole which the Legislatures have done is a complete mockery—a mere shadow of the plans recommended by the Government."

Mr. Secretary Stanley shall receive his answer to these criminatory and unfounded charges, not from me, but from those who have presided over the administration of the government of our Colonies.

Your attention has been already called, by my honourable friend, to the opinion pronounced by the Duke of Manchester on the prorogation of the

Assembly, in that very year in which we are charged with treating the recommendation of Government with contempt. His Grace had administered the Government of Jamaica for eighteen years; and to his great local experience might be added his entire freedom from any Colonial bias, if that must necessarily accompany the possession of Colonial property. His Grace had not the most remote interest in any Colonial property.

It is true the Slave law of 1826 was rejected on account of certain provisions it contained relative to sectarians; but let me give you the terms, in which Mr. Secretary Huskisson expressed himself of its other provisions? "His Majesty has perceived with much satisfaction the advances which the Colonial Legislature have made in many respects to meet the recommendations conveyed to them in Lord Bathurst's dispatch of the 11th of May 1826: but, however much His Majesty may have been desirous to sanction these valuable improvements in the Slave Code of Jamaica, it has been found impossible to overcome the objections to which other enactments of this law are open." Again, "The many wise and beneficent provisions which it contains have been fully appreciated."

Let me next add the opinions conveyed to the Legislatures of the other Colonies by his Majesty's Secretaries of State. On the law passed in Barbadoes, Mr. Secretary Huskisson, in a dispatch of the 18th October 1827, remarks—"This Act con-

tains unequivocal advances to a better system of law, of which His Majesty is graciously pleased to mark his approbation by its allowance."

On the law of St. Vincent, the Secretary of State, in a dispatch dated the 14th March 1827, says: "His Majesty has observed with satisfaction the progress made by these enactments in the measures to be taken for the improvement of the state of the Slave population. Upon a review of the whole of this law, I am commanded by His Majesty to express his satisfaction with the general disposition of the Council and Assembly to adopt the recommendations which have been addressed to them on this important subject."

On the law of Dominica, Lord Bathurst, in a dispatch of the 3rd April 1827, says:—"His Majesty is graciously pleased to acknowledge with commendation the disposition which the Legislature of Dominica have manifested, in many of the provisions of these Acts, to improve the condition of the Slave population; and, considering that they are in general framed in such a manner as to promote the well-being of that class of society, His Majesty has, with the advice of his Privy Council, been pleased to confirm them."

On that of St. Christopher, Mr. Secretary Huskisson observes, in a dispatch of the 7th March 1828: "This Act is remarkable for the wisdom and humanity of the greater part of its provisions."

On the Grenada law, Lord Bathurst, in a dis-

patch of the 30th October 1825, says:—"It only remains for me to do the Council and Assembly of Grenada the justice of acknowledging the spirit of liberality and benevolence by which some of the provisions are characterized, which, without any suggestion from His Majesty's Government, have been spontaneously devised and executed by the Legislature."

Sir George Murray, in his dispatch of the 8th June 1829, thus characterizes the Assembly of Grenada: "A Colonial Legislature which has honourably distinguished itself in the improvement of the Slave code."

On the act of the Bahamas Legislature, Mr. Secretary Huskisson, in a dispatch dated the 5th March 1828, says, that he is "commanded by His Majesty to express his very gracious approbation of the disposition which the Legislature of the Bahama Islands have manifested to acquiesce in so large a proportion of the suggestions which were made by his command, for the improvement of the condition of the Slave population of the Colony."

To the Governor of Demerara and Essequibo Lord Bathurst addresses a dispatch, dated 9th July 1825, in which he says: "I am commanded by His Majesty to direct you to signify to the Court of Policy his approbation of the zeal with which they have proceeded to give effect to his wishes, as explained by me in my dispatch of the 20th November 1824; and you will assure the members of the Court, that His Majesty has been

pleased to receive with great satisfaction this mark of their disposition to ameliorate the condition and elevate the character of the Slaves under their protection."

To the Governor of Berbice, in a dispatch of the the 26th December 1826, Lord Bathurst, on the same ordinance, observes: "I am to desire that you will convey to this Court the sense which His Majesty entertains of the highly praiseworthy manner in which they have applied themselves to the subjects which have been brought under their consideration."

On the 1st March 1826, Mr. Secretary Canning, who was no very indulgent commentator on the acts of Colonial Legislatures, gives the following statement:—"Copies of the Order in Council upon these points had been transmitted to the Colonial Legislatures of Demerara, Berbice, Jamaica, Barbadoes, Bermudas, Antigua, Dominica, Grenada, Tobago, St. Vincent's, St. Kitt's, and St. Lucia. In the Island of Mauritius, which stood to this country in a similar relation with Trinidad, the regulations had been enforced by the publication of the Order; but the twelve Colonies, whose names he had just mentioned, had Legislatures of their own, or at least constituted organs, through which they made known the expression of their will. By the latest accounts which had been received from those Colonies, he found that of the clause relative to Religious Instruction, modified more or less by the circumstances in which each of them was placed,

eight out of the twelve had taken cognizance. With regard to the clause respecting the admission of Negro evidence in cases where Whites were concerned, he found that seven out of the twelve either admitted such evidence before, or had agreed to admit it now. With respect to marriage, he was sorry to say that there were five of them only in which any thing had been done in consequence of the recommendation of Parliament. As to the security of property, he had to inform the House that, under certain limitations and modifications, eight of them had taken cognizance of that clause, or had rendered the property of Negroes secure before. With respect to the manumission of Slaves, he found that the greater part of the Colonies had legislated on the point before the arrival of the Order in Council among them. The clause prohibiting the sale of Slaves of the same family in separate lots, had been adopted by only four Colonies; but he was happy to state that the objections which had been urged against it, were in all the Colonies rather of a legal than a moral nature, and were such as could not be removed by the Colonies themselves. As to the clause respecting the non-separation of females from their children, only five had yet agreed to it. As to the clause relating to the punishment of Slaves, and the abolition of the whip, he had to inform them that eight had adopted new regulations, meeting in one way or other the wishes of the British Parliament."

Mr. Secretary Huskisson, in his place in the House of Commons, on the 6th March 1828, said: "The first great step taken for their (the Slaves') improvement, was the prevention of further importation from Africa. All the others have gradually followed: and *the progress since made is such, that, if not interrupted by internal disturbance, it will lead to that result which must induce Parliament to think* that it has done better in adopting measures of gradual amelioration, than in proceeding at once to the rash measure, which would require large compensation, and, perhaps, be attended with ruin to the Colonies."

To all these authorities, to whom Mr. Secretary Stanley's representation of the progress of legislation in the Colonies is directly opposed, I add another authority—the Right Honourable Secretary himself. Not many months ago, in addressing the Electors of Lancashire, he gave this frank, candid, and just testimony on the proceedings of the Colonial Legislatures. "I honour those conscientious and zealous individuals who consider Slavery a blot in our system, and who are therefore anxious to get rid of it at the earliest period. But they must look at what is practicable as well as desirable. Let them trust to us, and allow us to say that we have not been idle. *We have made considerable progress, through means of education and religious instruction, to fit the Slave for that great change which is at some time intended for him.*"

I will now address myself to Mr. Stanley's

misrepresentation of particular provisions in the Jamaica Act:—

"In Jamaica they had agreed to a law, by which no Slave could receive more than thirty-nine stripes in one day. But what protection was that against tyranny and oppression, when it was left to the owner or overseer to inflict that number for the most trifling offence, and sometimes for no offence at all? A gentleman, whose name he forgot, but who had given evidence before the Committee, stated that the punishment of thirty-nine stripes could be inflicted at any time, and for any offence; and that if a Slave even gave him a look, he had a right to order him to receive thirty-nine lashes."

The gentleman, (Mr. Wildman,) on whose testimony he advanced that assertion, and for whom I have a great personal respect, expressed his opinion, and his opinion only, on the construction of a particular clause in the law. The clause is this: "That no Slave on any plantation or settlement, or in any of the workhouses or gaols in this island, shall receive more than ten lashes at one time and for one offence, unless the owner, attorney, guardian, executor or administrator, or overseer of such plantation or settlement, having such Slave in his care, or keeper of such workhouse, or keeper of such gaol, shall be present: and that no such owner, attorney, guardian, executor, administrator, overseer, workhouse-keeper, or gaol-keeper, *shall* on any account punish a Slave with more

than thirty-nine lashes at one time and for one offence; nor inflict nor suffer to be inflicted such last-mentioned punishment, or any other number of lashes, twice in the same day, nor until the delinquent has recovered from the effects of any former punishment, under a penalty not less than ten pounds, nor more than twenty pounds, for every offence, to be recovered against the person directing or permitting such punishment, in a summary manner, upon conviction before any three magistrates, by warrant of distress and sale; and in default of payment, the said magistrates are hereby required and empowered to commit such offender to the common gaol for any space of time not exceeding ten days, besides being subject to be prosecuted by indictment in the Supreme or Assize Courts, or Courts of Quarter Sessions of this island, as for an offence committed against this Act."

This witness had been resident in the island for a comparatively short period; not more, I believe, than three years. This opinion was contradicted by two witnesses, both of whom had been for many years resident there, and were peculiarly conversant with the execution of the law. One of those witnesses, who had been for a long time the defender of Slaves, was examined by the same Committee before whom Mr. Wildman had given his evidence. I will read that part of his examination:—

"Q. You have been asked as to the construc-

tion of the thirty-third section; were you ever in court yourself so as to know the construction put by the judges on the thirty-third section?—A. Yes.

"Q. What was the construction put upon it?—A. Many persons in England have an idea that under that Act an overseer has a power to give a Slave thirty-nine lashes whenever he pleases; but that is not the construction that any legal man or any magistrate to my knowledge has ever put upon it. I know of several trials which have taken place of overseers, before the tribunals of two magistrates associating themselves together, and hearing the evidence of Slaves against their overseers: the overseer always has a summons to attend, to give a reason for the punishment he has given. It is not because the Negro has committed a trifling offence, that he may give thirty-nine. An overseer has perhaps said he thought he might go to the number of thirty-nine: the magistrates have said, 'Yes, for aggravated offences; but you have overstepped the law;' and for the purpose of letting him know he must not go to that extent, they have fined the overseer."

The other witness gave his evidence on oath. Of the weight which belongs to the testimony of that witness, I am the last person to speak, because he is the individual now before you; but this I may say, that he had been acquainted with the administration of the law in that Colony for *twenty* years; and that during twelve years he

had discharged the functions of law officer of the Crown without fear and without favour. I will read to you the evidence of that witness: "It has been said that this clause gives to the owner or overseer an authority to inflict thirty-nine lashes at any one time, and that he might do so without regard to the cause for which those thirty-nine lashes were inflicted; in short, that it is a law sanctioning the infliction of that degree of punishment. Now I have no hesitation in stating, that an overseer, although he did not exceed the number of thirty-nine lashes, although he inflicted less than thirty-nine lashes, might make himself amenable to the subsequent clause of the Act, which subjects him to prosecution for maltreating, or wantonly whipping, beating, or punishing the Negro; because if causelessly he inflicted thirty-nine lashes, if he inflicted them on any of the pretences which it may be supposed he might have availed himself of, I should consider that he had been guilty of wantonly whipping, or beating, or of the offence of maltreating, in the language of the twenty-ninth clause of the Act, and liable to be prosecuted for that offence: and I have no doubt, speaking from my experience of juries, that establishing before them that those thirty-nine lashes had been given causelessly, or on a mere pretext, his conduct would have been considered as wanton punishment, or as maltreatment, within the meaning of the law; and an indictment against him would have been sustained. I know in re-

spect to the language of that clause, it was expressed in terms sufficiently comprehensive to meet every case of cruel treatment by inflicting any number of stripes, whether exceeding or less than the number mentioned in the thirty-fourth clause."

Another misrepresentation connected with this part of the Slave Law is so striking, that it is quite impossible that the Right Honourable Secretary could have read this clause. He asserts that the law, which, in consequence of the maltreatment of the Slave by his owner, authorizes the Court to remove the Slave from this or any other master's control by awarding him his manumission, requires that the price of the Slave should be paid to the owner. Now let me refer you to the clause itself: it subjects the person guilty of such maltreatment to a fine of £100, or imprisonment not exceeding twelve months, or both; and in case the person convicted be the owner, the Court is empowered to declare the Slave free, and to direct the fine of £100 to be paid to the Justices and Vestry of the parish to which the Slave belonged, on condition of their paying to such Slave an annuity of £10 for his life. Thus the penalty of £100, which according to the law is to be paid by the owner, as a fund for the maintenance of the manumitted Slave, is converted by His Majesty's Secretary of State into the price of the manumission to be paid to the owner of the Slave. And *here, whilst* I am speaking of this clause, let me

mention, amongst other instances which might be adduced of judicial sentences of manumission, one particular case, because it affords a striking proof not only of an executory principle in the law, but of solicitude on the part of the Colonial Court to execute that principle. A person named Boyden was convicted of the maltreatment of his Slave: he was not the sole owner of the Slave, but a tenant in common with others; and his co-tenants resisted the application made by me to the Court for the manumission of the Slave, on the ground that it would deprive them of their property, although they had no share in the delinquency of the defendant; but the Court overruled this objection, and awarded the manumission.

Another misrepresentation of the Right Honourable Secretary is that which he has made respecting the admission of the Evidence of Slaves. He says: "By one of the Orders in Council, the black man was to be allowed to give his evidence in a Court of Justice, subject to the same regulations as the evidence of a child in this country, namely, the questions of the judge as to his knowledge and his sense of the obligation of an oath. But was this admitted by the planter? No! No Negro could be received as a witness unless he had the certificate of his owner, or of some clergyman; yet after it had been proved by his master, or by a clergyman, that he was competent to give evidence on oath, that evidence was

so restricted that it could hardly apply to any but Negroes."

Now in the smaller Colonies there is no restriction whatever as to the admissibility of Slave Evidence. In the Island of Jamaica, the clause which admits it is in the following terms :—

"Clause 130.—It enacts, that upon any complaint made before a Justice of the Peace of any murder, felony, burglary, robbery, rebellion, or rebellious conspiracy, treason, or traitorous conspiracy, rape, mutilation, branding, dismembering or cruelly beating, or confining without sufficient support, a Slave or Slaves, or in any cases of seditious meetings, or of harbouring or concealing runaway Slaves, or giving false tickets or letters to such runaway Slaves to enable them to elude detection, or on any inquisition before a Coroner, the evidence of any Slave or Slaves, respecting such complaint or inquisition, shall be received and taken by such Justice of the Peace or Coroner; and on any prosecution in any of the Courts of this Island, for any of the crimes before mentioned, the evidence of a Slave or Slaves shall also be admitted and received :—Provided always, that before such evidence shall be received, the Justice of the Peace, Coroner, or Court, shall be satisfied, on due examination had, that such Slave comprehends the nature and obligation of an oath :—And provided also, that nothing herein contained shall prevent the Court from receiving objections as to the

competency of such witness, or from receiving evidence as to credibility of such witness, in like manner as they would receive the same as to free persons:—And provided also, that no free person shall be convicted of any of the crimes aforesaid, whenever the evidence of any slave shall be admitted, unless two Slaves at least clearly and consistently deposed to the same fact or circumstance, such Slaves being examined apart and out of the hearing of each other; or unless the evidence of one Slave shall be corroborated by some free person deposing clearly and distinctly to the same fact or circumstance, such free person and Slave to be examined separately and apart from each other."

Where does the Right Honourable Secretary find in this law any certificate required, either from the owner or from any clergyman, to enable the Slave to give evidence? By what single Colonial Act is a certificate from the owner required? I know that it *was* required by an Act of the Antigua Legislature, but the Act was disallowed by His Majesty. If the Right Honourable Secretary had given a fair and candid representation of Colonial Legislation on this important subject, he would have specifically named the particular Colony in which alone such a restriction existed, and not have left it to be inferred that it existed in every other Colony.

It is true that the Jamaica Act requires that the testimony of a single Slave should be corroborated

by that of another Slave or free person. But does not the Right Honourable Secretary know that in the most civilized countries of Europe which adopt the civil law, that in the Courts of Scotland, and that even in proceedings under the statute of 11th and 12th Will. III., to which he referred, the testimony of two witnesses is necessary to convict. Who then would condemn the application of the same rule of evidence to those who were only on the threshold of civilization? The Right Honourable Secretary has referred to an exception to this clause. He says, there is, however, an exception, and that is when a white man joined himself with a Negro woman, and degraded himself in the eyes of the planters. In that case the evidence of a Negro was good against the white man. Now let us see what the clause is. It enacts, "That if any free person or persons shall aid or assist any Slave or Slaves in the commission of any crime or illegal offence, or shall employ them in such offences, the testimony of such Slaves shall be received against such free person or persons, except where the life of such free person or persons shall be affected, and admitted in such manner as the testimony of accomplices in crime is received in courts of law." But why does he read this clause as exclusively applicable to the free white man? Is it not equally applicable to the free man of colour? Cannot the Right Honourable Gentleman perceive that the real object of *this* clause is to prevent such an outrage on moral

feeling, as that a Slave might receive punishment for his offence, whilst the free man, whether white or coloured, who was an equally and perhaps a more guilty participator in the very same offence, might escape punishment?

The Right Honourable Secretary then undertakes to assert, that the total amount of the manumissions in all the Colonies was, during the last ten years, 14,163. In the island of Jamaica alone, between the years 1817 and 1830, there were 8442 actually recorded in the Secretary's Office. It is perfectly well known, that this does not comprise any thing like the whole number of manumissions. There are many which the parties never record; there are others which take place in various ways, and never find their way to the Record Office. Of 4782 manumissions which took place in Jamaica between 1817 and 1826, 2831 were gratuitous. The Right Honourable Gentleman says two-thirds are females. Is he correct in that calculation? and is he justified in insinuating a particular motive for manumission of that sex? But he boldly asserts that not twenty field Negroes were manumized. In another part of his speech he says, "show me an instance of a field Negro ever manumized." I believe there is not a man possessing any acquaintance with Jamaica, who would not feel utterly amazed at such an assertion. There has been just put into my hands a paper, in which the writer speaks from

his own knowledge of twenty-five field Negroes, belonging to two estates, manumized at one time.

The Right Honourable Gentleman's next charge is, that the Slave population are debarred from religious instruction. "Oh, but it was said," exclaims Mr. Stanley, "the Slaves were not instructed in religion; they were wholly ignorant, and therefore unfit to participate in the blessings of freedom. If he granted this argument, he might ask on whom did the guilt fall? upon whom was it to be charged that the Slaves were still ignorant? Was it not upon those who from their cradles to their graves looked upon the Slave in the light of a chattel property, and used him as a labouring animal? It was to the shame of a Christian age, and a country professing Christianity, that it debarred a number of its subjects from the means of Christian instruction, because that instruction was considered incompatible with a state of Slavery." To such an assertion I oppose the fact, that from the public revenue of the island of Jamaica no less a sum than £24,000 is annually provided for religious instruction, besides a sum of at least an equal amount from the revenues of each parish.

I will add one further instance of the spirit with which Mr. Stanley addressed the House. He relied on the testimony of a witness named Loving, who had been examined before the Committee of the House of Commons. I presume the Right

Honourable Gentleman read the whole of that person's evidence. If he did, he must have seen at the close of it, that the witness did not stay to complete his examination, but quitted the country before the truth of some of the circumstances to which he deposed had been ascertained by the test of a cross-examination.

I have confined myself to these instances of the misrepresentation, and of the unfair and uncandid spirit, which pervaded the whole of Mr. Stanley's speech, in order that I might not detain you by giving a detailed repetition of those parts of it which have been selected and answered by my friend Mr. Barrett. Besides, I was desirous of confining myself to those misrepresentations which could be corrected, not by me, but by the deliberate declarations of other Ministers of the Crown.

The Right Honourable Gentleman's estimate of the spirit and character of Colonial Legislation is directly opposed to that of the several Ministers whom I have named. Can it be doubtful which of those estimates is entitled to the greatest weight? Is it that which has been formed by the Right Honourable Gentleman, whose connexion with the Office is of a few weeks only, whose opportunities for becoming acquainted with the codes of laws prevailing in twenty-one Colonies must have been indeed few, and whose knowledge of them must have been necessarily most limited and superficial?

or is it the estimate formed by those of longer connexion with the Office, of much greater experience, and of a much more intimate acquaintance with the various legislative proceedings of those Colonies? Surely, in this conflict of opinion there was enough to have induced the Right Honourable Secretary to pause, before he adopted that which should hold up the Colonists to the reproach and hatred of the people of England, which should rouse the popular resentment against them, and indispose them to listen to those claims of justice which he himself is obliged to admit. But there is another and more important view, in which Mr. Stanley's misrepresentations must be regarded. His pretext for the extinction of West-India Slavery by legislative enactment, and not by means which should effect a progressive improvement in the character of the Slave population, and prepare them to participate in those civil rights and privileges which are enjoyed by other classes of His Majesty's subjects, is, that the Colonial Legislatures have refused to adopt such measures.

The same pretext is urged by him for suspending the functions of the Colonial Legislatures, and destroying the constitution under which the Colonists have hitherto held their property in security. He had to make out a case which would justify his abandonment of the Resolutions of the House of Commons of 1823, and his entire departure

from that course which every statesman had prescribed as the only one by which the termination of Slavery was to be effected.

I have referred to the opinions of statesmen; and, singularly enough, the names I shall now mention are those on whose authority the Right Honourable Gentleman himself relies. Even Mr. Wilberforce's opinions do not afford Mr. Stanley any sanction for the course he has taken.

On the 28th of February 1805, Mr. Wilberforce, in his place in the House of Commons, said he had never concealed, that his hope was, that such (the eventual emancipation of the Negroes in the West Indies) might be the "ultimate effect of the abolition of the African importation, but that was a period the distance of which he had never attempted to calculate, although his opponents had charged him with having it immediately in view. Had that been his object, or even his hope, he should not deserve the word '*humane*' to be added to his views; but a shorter one, and that was the word '*mad*,' ought to be applied to his object. But although he felt *that the immediate emancipation of the Negroes in the West Indies could not be expected*, (for that, before they could be fit to receive freedom, *it would be madness to attempt to give it them*,) yet he owned he looked forward, and so he hoped did many others, to the time when the Negroes in the West Indies should have the full enjoyment of a free, moral, industrious, and happy peasantry."

On the 17th of March 1807, in answer to Earl Percy's motion for leave to bring in a Bill for the gradual abolition of Slavery, Sir Charles Pole said, "His plan was, that all children born after a certain age should be declared free; that he rejoiced that this measure had been brought forward thus early, because it showed the cloven foot which had been attempted to be concealed: he believed that this was one main object in view by the Abolitionists," &c. Mr. Wilberforce said, "that, had the motion proceeded from a less respectable quarter, he should have been as glad as the Honourable Baronet that it had been made; because it would show that he, and those who thought with him, made *the distinction* between the abolition of the Trade and the *emancipation* of the Slaves, and not only abstained from proposing the latter, but were ready to reject such a proposition when made by others. How much soever he looked forward with anxious expectation to the period when the Negroes might with safety be liberated, he knew too well the effect which the long continuance of abject slavery produced on the human mind, to think of their immediate emancipation; a measure which, at the present moment, would be injurious to them, and ruinous to the Colonies."

Again Mr. Wilberforce, in his letter to the Freeholders and other Inhabitants of Yorkshire, published in 1807, notices the charge made against *the Abolitionists* of aiming at immediate emanci-

pation ; and also the charge of inconsistency preferred against them for not immediately emancipating the Slaves. "To grant it (Emancipation) to them immediately, would be to insure not only their masters' ruin, but their own. *A certain previous course of discipline is necessary, they must be trained and educated for this most perfect state of manly maturity;* and by a singular felicity of coincidence, the stoppage of all further importations from Africa, with all the consequences which it introduces in its train, is *the very shortest and safest* path by which the Slaves can travel to the enjoyment of true liberty."

On the 10th of June 1807, Mr. Fox repeated that "the abolition of the Slave Trade, and the Emancipation of Slaves, were two points totally distinct;" and he remarked, that if the abolition of the Slave Trade could not be accomplished without the consent of the Planters, there was ample proof that it would never be accomplished at all. "But with regard to Emancipation, I perfectly agree in what has been said, that the idea of *an Act of Parliament to emancipate the Slaves in the West Indies, without the consent and concurrent feeling of all parties concerned both in this Country and in that,* would not only be mischievous in its consequences, *but totally extravagant in its conception, as well as impracticable in its execution;* and therefore I see no good in discussing that point."

On the 10th of February 1807, Lord Grenville

said, that "he was glad to find that the opponents of the measure were nearly reduced to one argument, and that was, that the Bill did not extend to the emancipation of the Slaves already on the Island. The attempted application, however, of the same justice and humanity to both causes resolved itself into this. In abolishing the Trade, we did justice to the inhabitants of Africa, who were the parties aggrieved; but in giving liberty to the Slaves on the Islands, we should do the greatest injustice to them in giving them that which they would not know how to use, and which would only be productive to them of injury. That liberty, the blessings of which we were enabled properly to estimate and appreciate, would be to them, in their state of ignorance and barbarism, a poison of the most baneful nature."

I have omitted to allude to Mr. Wyndham, another of the authorities to whom the Right Honourable Secretary refers; but whoever reads the speeches of this great man, of the 27th February and 16th March, 1807, on the abolition of the Slave Trade, will find it difficult to imagine that his sanction would have been given to the present measure.

But there are other authorities whom I would invoke, and to whom the Right Honourable Gentleman cannot, as a member of the present Government, object. The first is the present Lord Chancellor.

In his Inquiry into the Colonial Policy of the

European Powers, published in 1803, he characterizes his own effort to explain the principles that govern that condition of society which is involved in a state of slavery, as an attempt to sketch a few features of the picture, which the experience of the past holds up for the instruction of those who may be inclined to sport with "*Negro Emancipation.*" He then lays it down as an axiom, that all attempts speedily to change the state of society in Slave Colonies by Legislative enactments are, if possible, still more ridiculous, and, if attended with material consequences, still more dangerous, than similar endeavours made suddenly to new-model communities of the ordinary texture. He says that the Africans must undergo a radical change, before they are fit for freedom; that they must be inspired with the sense of general expediency, and the love of order. In such circumstances, it is idle to talk of laws and regulations. Men must be found ready to obey and to conform. Manners and circumstances are independent of positive institutions. They prescribe bounds to the decrees of despotism, and give laws to the Legislator in the plenitude of his power.

On the 23rd of February 1807, Lord Grey (then Lord Howick) said, "We have been told that if this be considered as a measure of justice, we do not follow up her own principles; for, if Slavery be in itself unjust, we ought to abolish it altogether. I think it sufficient to say, that the result of this

measure will, I trust, lead to the abolition of Slavery, encouraged and assisted by such regulations as the wisdom of Parliament may afterwards think fit to adopt. I trust, that, by this measure, Slavery will gradually wear out, without the immediate intervention of any positive law, in like manner as took place in the States of Greece and Rome, and some parts of modern Europe, where Slaves have been permitted to work out and purchase their own freedom; and that such regulations may be adopted as have been in some of the Spanish and Portuguese Colonies. (Lord H. further illustrated this, by reference to some parts of the United States, and then observed)—But, the abolition of Slavery must be gradually, and not suddenly, effected; and this, both on the principles of justice to the Planters, and also to the Slaves themselves: for, in the present reduced circumstances of the Slaves, to propose their immediate Emancipation, would be to produce horrors similar to those which have already happened at Saint Domingo."

On the 10th of June 1806, Lord Lansdowne (then Lord Henry Petty) said, "The Right Honourable Gentleman who has just sat down, by referring to what I said, has misunderstood me. He says, that I spoke of free labour, and from thence not only drew a conclusion in favour of the abolition of the Slave Trade, but also for the Emancipation of the Negroes. Now, Sir, if he means that I am of opinion that the immediate abolition

of the Slave Trade should be accompanied by a proclamation, granting immediate freedom to the Slaves in the West Indies, I can assure him I have no such wild, irrational, or impracticable idea. But, if he means that I look to the abolition of the Slave Trade as likely ultimately to produce Emancipation, I certainly do conceive it possible, by amending the situation of the Slaves, and by the progressive improvement of their minds, moral character, and habits, as far as they are capable of improvement in such a state, that they should pass from Slavery to free Labour, as they become fit for it. In that sense, and in that sense only, I look for the Emancipation of the Negroes."

But, if these authorities fail to produce an influence on the Right Honourable Gentleman, there remains one authority to whom I would appeal, and that authority is the Right Honourable Gentleman himself. With the manliness which distinguishes him, he disdains at an Election Hustings to gratify popular delusion, by making rash and dangerous pledges on the subject of Negro Emancipation, or by joining in popular reproach against the Colonists. On that occasion he could admit, that much had been done for the amelioration of the Slave population. "By advocating this question," says Mr. Stanley, in his speech to the Electors of Lancaster, "I well know that some men have acquired great popularity, and if I were to give an unconditional pledge upon the subject, I should, in all probability, obtain

some additional votes. I am now about to speak of that which I know is practicable, and able to be effected; and I should not be doing my duty, were I to hold out an expectation, without reserve, that Emancipation should immediately take place, and that the *whole system of countries which have existed for centuries*, SHOULD BE INSTANTLY CHANGED *in a moment by a legislative enactment of Britain.* I abhor Slavery in my soul as much as any man; I know the tendency it has to make the master a tyrant, and the Slave sullen and discontented with his lot. I also declare, that there is no object which Government has so deeply at heart, as the abolition of Negro Slavery, when it can be done with real and permanent advantage to the Slaves themselves. *Yet we dare not overlook the mass of capital and the vast interests embarked by British subjects in the West-India Colonies, under the sanction of former Acts of Parliament. Do not, Gentlemen, call upon Government to perform impossibilities*—do not call upon us to pledge ourselves to that which we cannot carry into effect by *a hasty and dangerous derangement of a system, which, however repugnant to the feelings, might, in its immediate abolition, be productive of ten-fold greater evils.* Allow something, I ask of you, Gentlemen, to the natural fears and prejudices of the West-India Proprietor, for that property which he ~ains from the labour of the Slaves, and *which it is oubtful whether it could be superseded by free emloyment.* Sift the question thoroughly, but dispas-

sionately—*go to the Slave himself, and ask him if he is desirous of being turned out of his house and his provision-grounds;* for though you may take him from his owner, you cannot take away the land also, for that is as much the right of the proprietor as the estate of any nobleman or gentleman within these realms. Inquire if he is willing to *forego that protection afforded by the law to the young and to the aged, to the sick and the infirm, for the master is bound to maintain them, when, instead of a benefit, they often are a burden to him.* Investigate how far immediate abolition would affect his feelings, his comfort, and *even his very existence.* Then again, *inquire what is likely to be the master's fate amidst such hasty resolution.* Examine into different systems which are likely to be beneficial, and endeavour to find out which are the best modes to be adopted to make them practically effective. Don't stand still, Gentlemen—go on in your great work of humanity step by step, calmly and conscientiously, and then you may carry to a good end that anxiety and zeal which you feel, and come to some satisfactory issue, advantageous alike both to Master and Slave."

I pass on to the Right Honourable Gentleman's demand for the interference of Parliamentary Legislation on such a measure, which necessarily involves the destruction of the constitutional rights of the Colonists, and which the Right Honourable Gentleman treats almost as a matter of course. You have heard the opinions of Mr. Pitt, and to these I would add the opinion of Mr. Canning

in the debate of the 16th of March 1824. He thus expresses himself:—" No feeling of wounded pride—no motive of questionable expediency—nothing short of real and demonstrable necessity, shall induce me to moot the awful question of the transcendental power of Parliament over every dependency of the British Crown. That transcendental power is an *arcanum* of empire, which ought to be kept back within the *penetralia* of the Constitution. It exists, but it should be veiled. It should not be produced upon trifling occasions, or in cases of petty refractoriness and temporary misconduct. It should be brought forward only in the utmost extremity of the State, where other remedies have failed to stay the raging of some moral or political pestilence."

Surely it is not supposed that the Right Honourable Secretary has established that real and demonstrable necessity, that utmost extremity of the State, which, in Mr. Canning's judgment, would alone justify a resort to that " arcanum " of empire, the transcendental power of Parliament. The necessity which Mr. Stanley urges has no existence. It rests only on his own unfounded representation, and on his own erroneous estimate of Colonial Legislation.

I may well doubt whether the Right Honourable Secretary quite understands the origin and constitution of the Colonial Legislatures, when he calls on the Colonial authorities to show any reason *or argument*, how it was possible for a dele-

gated authority to exceed the power which gave that authority. Surely he has not well informed himself of the source from whence the legislation exercised by the Colonies was derived. He is quite mistaken if he supposes it to have been delegated by the Parliament.

This is not the time, nor is it the place, for me to discuss the abstract legal right of the Colonists, unrepresented as they are, and necessarily must be in the House of Commons, to regulate by their own legislatures their internal affairs. I will content myself with stating, that the Legislative Assembly of Jamaica is coeval with the establishment of the Colony. Between the years 1661 and 1677, a free Constitution for its Government by a Governor and Council appointed by the Crown, and an Assembly elected by the people was established, and the laws were passed nearly in their present form.

The unprincipled ministry of Charles II., who had formed the plan of ruling England without Parliaments, attempted to deprive the people of Jamaica of that Constitution. They sent out a body of laws, to which the Assembly was required to consent, and the Governor was directed not to call any Assembly without special directions from the King. It was further required, that the same method in legislative matters should be adopted in Jamaica as in Ireland, according to the form prescribed by Poyning's law. A commission and instructions were prepared for Lord Carlisle, cor-

responding with this new plan of Government; and on the 19th of July, 1768, he arrived in the Island, and prepared to carry it into effect. An Assembly met in the following September, and one by one the laws presented to them were rejected. Unintimidated by the menaces and violence with which they were assailed, they inflexibly resisted these proposed innovations. They appealed to the King; and notwithstanding the general character of his Government, he disregarded the evil counsels of those by whom he was surrounded, and resorted to the advice of his judges. By their decision the claims of the inhabitants of Jamaica to their Constitution were recognized. Another commission was granted to Lord Carlisle, empowering him to call Assemblies in the manner and form then practised in Jamaica. It recognised their power, with the advice and consent of the Government and Council, to make, constitute, and ordain laws, statutes, and ordinances for the public peace, welfare, and good government of the Island, and the people and inhabitants thereof. Thus, after a struggle of three years, the Legislative Rights of the Assembly were solemnly recognised. Still, however, His Majesty had been advised to withhold his confirmation of a general code of laws which had been previously passed, and not to allow the adoption of those laws of England, which, as they were adapted to the situation of the Colony, had been *therefore* received and used.

It is no longer doubtful that resort was had to this policy, with no other view than that of extorting from the people of Jamaica a perpetual revenue resembling the 4½ per cents. They refused however to grant any revenue which should be placed beyond their control, or be applied otherwise than for the benefit of the Colony. The struggle between these despotic attempts to encroach on the Legislature on the one hand, and a determined resistance to them on the other, was maintained for a long time. Drafts of Bills were sent from England to be embodied by the Legislature into Acts, or the provisions of such Bills were dictated to the Assembly. In the space of one year, there had been twelve prorogations and three dissolutions of that body, and the same Bills, again urged by the Government, were again rejected by the Assembly. The struggle at length ceased. The resistance of the Legislature prevailed. The Government abandoned its unjust interference.

During the last one hundred years there have been three or four attempts to infringe on the rights of the Jamaica Legislature; but they have been jealously watched, successfully resisted, and in the end abandoned by the Government. The Noble Earl (Bathurst), in one of the dispatches to which my friend has referred, speaks only the sentiments which had long prevailed in the Colonial Office respecting those rights, and the jealousy with which they had been defended by the people of Jamaica.

In this rapid sketch of the history of the Constitution of Jamaica, it will be perceived that in all the contests between that Colony and the Government of the Parent State, the Assembly would have been allowed to retain the *semblance* of exercising its legislative functions. Even the profligate Minister of Charles II. endeavoured to obtain its consent before Poyning's system was forced upon it. The drafts of Bills, or the suggestions of the provisions of proposed Bills, which the Assembly was urged to adopt, were to have been made the subject of its legislative enactment, and to have been passed with all the formalities with which its Acts are passed at the present time. Thus even the very mode of the attack on its constitutional independence carried with it an implied recognition of its independent powers of legislation. Further, it will be perceived, that in no one instance did the Parliament interfere to enforce those measures, by making them the subject of its own legislative enactment. And yet, in the long and obstinate contest between the Government and the Colonies, there is no reason to doubt that the Minister who would have forced his measures on the Colonial Legislature would have been glad enough to have obtained such a sanction. He might have complained of the contempt with which the recommendations of the Government had been regarded; that for twelve years he had in vain endeavoured, by admonition and friendly warning, *to obtain* a compliance with those recommenda-

tions; he might have urged the dissolutions and prorogations of the Assembly to which the Governor was obliged to resort, as a proof of their disdainful rejection of his measures. At this period the principles of our Constitution, the powers of Parliament, the relation in which the Colonies stood to their Parent State, and the constitutional legislative rights of those Colonies, were quite as well understood as they are at present. But on no one occasion do we find that the Minister resorted to Parliament for its interference, or the Parliament assuming to interfere: no, it was reserved for the present Ministry to originate this invasion of the constitutional rights of a free people. The destruction of the well-examined, well-recognised Constitution of her Colonies, based on their own favourite principles of representation, is to be the work of that Ministry whose boast it is that they restored the Constitution of the Parent State to its original purity and freedom, by reforming its representation. The legislative interference of Parliament with the rights and property of those who have no share in its representation is to commence with the Ministry who, from their affected respect for the rights of the people, and their professed desire to restore to them their free Government, proclaimed that those rights were not protected, and that they had no free Government, unless the elective franchise was so extended as to secure every right and every interest its full representation. And a House of Commons

reformed on the principle that no legislation can be just, unless there be a full and free representation of all rights and all interests which can be the subjects of its legislation, is required, as one of its earliest acts, to legislate on the rights of those who are not and cannot be represented in that House, and who for that reason ought to be secured in the enjoyment of their own representative government.

But the Right Honourable Gentleman contends, that the right of Parliament to dispose of the property, and to make internal regulations for the government, of those who are unrepresented in Parliament, is supported by precedents. Those which he has cited are doubtless considered by himself, or by those from whom he received them, as the strongest and most apposite which can be found. The first is the statute of the 11th and 12th William III. cap. 7, "for the more effectual suppression of Piracy." The Right Honourable Gentleman says, that by this statute the Colonial tribunals were superseded by agents sent out from England, and disobedience was to be punished by a forfeiture of their Charters. He has been entirely misinformed as to the provisions of this Act. It provides for the trial of piracies in the Colonies, by Commissioners appointed under the Great Seal, or Seal of the Admiralty, of whom the Governor or Member of His Majesty's Council is to be one; and it declares, "that the re*fusal* of the Governor to obey the directions of the *statute shall* create a forfeiture of the Charter

granted for the government or propriety of the Plantation." One of its objects was, to avoid the expense of sending pirates to England for trial, under the 28th Henry VIII. cap. 13.; but perhaps its real object was to punish as pirates the adherents of James II., who after his abdication acted under commissions from him. The Right Honourable Gentleman will find that it superseded no Colonial tribunals; and the clause by which the forfeiture of Charters is incurred has relation to two species of Colonies or Plantations only—namely, those which were Proprietary Governments, granted by the Crown to individuals, in the nature of feudatory principalities, such as were North and South Carolina, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and others; and 2ndly, those called Charter Governments, in the nature of civil corporations, as Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut. It had no relation to the present West-India Legislative Colonies. But let this pass; let the Right Honourable Gentleman, if it pleases him, retain his mistaken notion, that the statute had been so flagrantly unjust as to deprive a whole people of their constitutional rights, on account of the delinquency of the Governor, in whose appointment they had no part, and over whom they had no control—instead of its applying only to the Lord Palatine of a Proprietary Government, who, as he had himself appointed the Governor, might be considered responsible for his default, and punishable by the forfeiture of his proprietary interest. Let the

Right Honourable Gentleman also lose sight of the principle, on which alone the Colonies are bound by the Acts of Navigation and Trade; and let him overlook too the fact, that with reference to the nature of the crime, and to the place in which it must necessarily be committed, the obligatory force of this statute respecting piracy might be admitted, without in any degree impairing the right of legislation by the Colonies on all other matters where no similar principle existed. Let this statute be presumed to be an Act of Legislation for the Colony of Jamaica. Yet it never had an hour's existence in that Colony for any one purpose whatever. At the time it passed, there was in force in that Colony an Act of its own Legislature for the punishment of Piracies, passed in the year 1681, 33 Car. II. cap. 7. Under that Act, and under that Act alone, has every trial and every conviction, and every execution of Pirates taken place; and no one instance ever occurred of a trial under the statute 11 and 12 William III. It was not even in force in South Carolina, where Major Bonnet and 33 others were tried for piracy in 1718.*

The other precedent, which the Right Honourable Gentleman has selected, is a statute passed in 1732, (5 Geo. II. c. 7,) which makes Negroes in the Colonies assets for the payment of debts. But what will be thought of this statute as a precedent, when I tell the Meeting that I do not believe there

* See 15, State Trials, 1233.

was any one of the West-India Colonies then belonging to Great Britain, in which Negroes had not been assets for the payment of debts, and had not been so declared by Acts of their Legislatures, passed long before that statute? In Jamaica they had been so declared by an Act passed in 1692, 8 Wm. III. c. 2. But the passing of this statute by the Parliament is no proof either of the right of the Parliament to pass it, or that it was in force in the Colony. It is to be recollected, that the Act, the 5th Geo. II. c. 7, so far as it related to the making of Negroes assets for the payment of debts, was repealed by an Act introduced by Mr. Bryan Edwards, passed on the 19th July 1797, 37 Geo. III. c. 119. Under that statute, Slaves would no longer be assets; but yet, notwithstanding that statute, they have continued to be, and still are, assets for the payment of debts in Jamaica, as well as in several other Colonies.

I am justified then in stating that these precedents do not establish the right for which Mr. Stanley contends.

The Right Honourable Gentleman has bestowed a very cursory glance at the Act of 1778, by which it was declared, that the Parliament of Great Britain would not impose any duty or tax payable in any of the Colonies, except only such duties as it might be expedient to impose for the regulation of Commerce, the net produce of which should be applied to the use of the Colony. The object of that Act was to give the Colonists the solemn

assurance of Parliament that their property should not be dealt with by any other Legislature than their own. Thus, then, although it prohibits the Parliament of Great Britain from passing any statute which, by way of tax, should deprive the Colonist of a part of the annual services of his Negroes; yet, the Right Honourable Gentleman insists that, consistently with that Act, the Parliament might pass a statute which should deprive him of his whole property in that Negro.

Here I will close that which I proposed to address to the meeting on Mr. Secretary Stanley's speech. I was anxious that his general accusations against the Colonial Legislature should receive their answer, not from me, but from those Ministers who had the most ample means to ascertain, and the strongest motives for justly appreciating, the proceedings of those Legislatures. I have therefore been obliged to give you quotations from their correspondence and speeches.

My answer to his particular and specific accusation is derived from the very sources on which he rests his accusations. They are beyond the reach of contradiction.

I have, in a great measure, confined myself to the laws and institutions of Jamaica. That Colony appears to have been singled out by him as the principal—I had almost said the sole—object of his attack.

I shall make no observations here on his scheme *of Emancipation*. Its gross violation of the rights of

property, and its entire disregard of all the means by which the future well-being of the Negro himself might be best promoted, the cultivation of the Colonies continued, and the safety of the inhabitants secured, have been already abundantly exposed, if all exposition of its inevitably fatal effects did not fall far short of every man's personal consciousness of them.

If the Government perseveres in that scheme, they have for ever lost the West-India Colonies for any purpose of public or private benefit.

And yet it is this scheme, in which the Right Honourable Gentleman, in utter ignorance of the state of Colonial society, and in opposition to all experience, has so much confidence that he considers it a consummation to which Mr. Wilberforce might apply that beautiful and prophetic ejaculation of Simeon, on the first presentation of our Saviour in the temple: "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation!" Surely this sacred strain ought to be so exclusively consecrated to that salvation which the holy prophet hailed, as never to be used in describing any plan which the fallen and imperfect nature of man can conceive or execute. The Right Honourable Gentleman, when he applied it to describe the effects of his scheme, must have forgotten how it had been before profaned by others. It was proved on the trial of the Rev. Hugh Peters, the regicide, that after the commencement of the trial of Charles I. he concluded his sermon with

the following exclamation: "I have prayed and preached these twenty years; and now I may say with old Simeon, *Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.*"

In more modern times another minister of the Gospel, Dr. Price, could apply it to the atrocious events which were taking place in France.

The Right Honourable Gentleman's recent connexion with the Colonial Office has necessarily obliged him to rely on the information he received from others. I can then transfer to them the injustice of having endeavoured to mislead the House and to divert the public mind from a due consideration of the proposed measure, and a just regard for the rights of those whom it affects. But there is no one to whom I can transfer the responsibility of that tone of acrimonious reproach, and of that attitude of fierce hostility, with which, renouncing the part more becoming his station of King's Minister of allaying the prejudices and conciliating the feelings of their adversaries, he assumed that of the stern and relentless persecutor of those in whose defence no voice could then be heard.

THE END.

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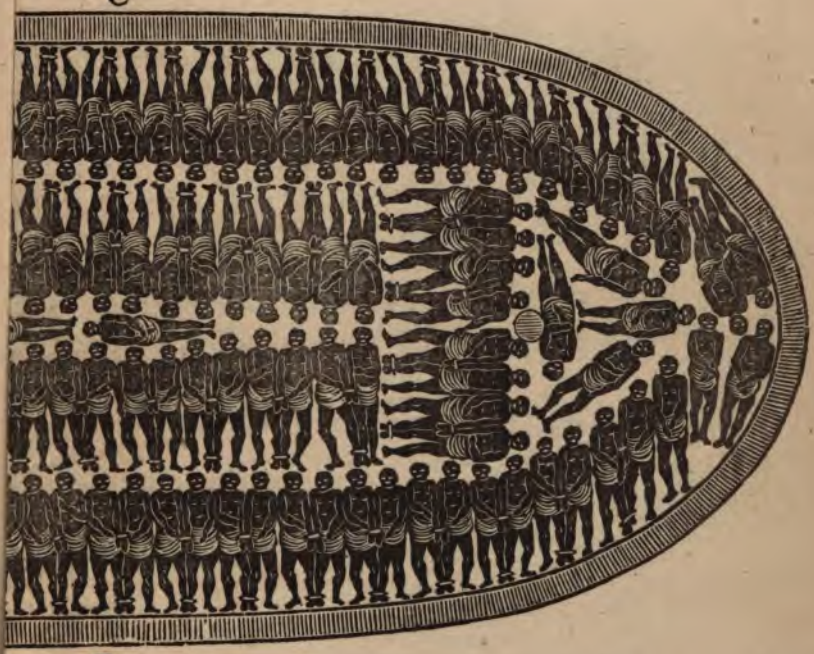

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C. C. Quartos de Homens.

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